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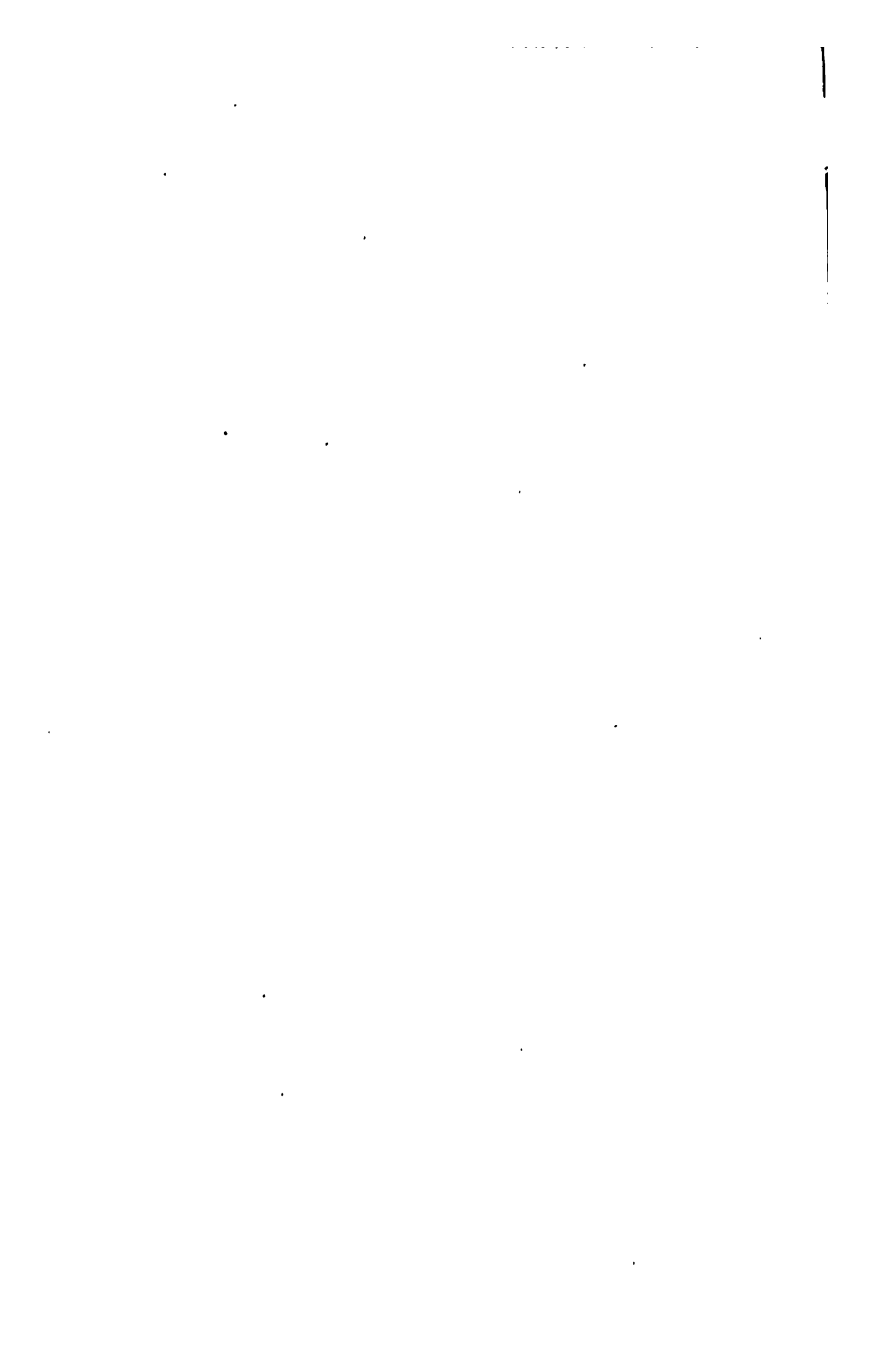
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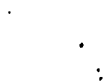
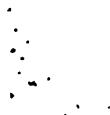
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HELMINGHAM SCHOOLS. BUILT A.D. 1854.

HOME TRUTHS.



CRY ALOUD, SPARE NOT, LIFT UP
THY VOICE LIKE A TRUMPET!!

ISAIAH 58.1.



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Home Truths.

BEING MISCELLANEOUS ADDRESSES AND TRACTS,

BY THE

REV. J. C. RYLE, B. A.,

Rector of Helmingham, Suffolk.

ARRANGED, REVISED, AND CORRECTED SPECIALLY
FOR THIS EDITION.

FIFTH SERIES.

*"If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare
himself to the battle." (1 Cor. xiv. 8.)*

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Do You Want a Friend ? *

CANT. V. 16.

"This is my Friend."

Reader,

The year is fast rolling away. Christmas is once more coming round. There will be the old family gatherings. There will be the annual meeting of friends. And how will Christmas find you ? *Have you a friend ?*

A friend is one of the greatest blessings on earth. Tell me not of money. Affection is better than gold. Sympathy is better than lands. He is the poor man who has no friends. *Have you a friend ?*

This world is full of sorrow, because it is full of sin. It is a dark place. It is a lonely place. It is a disappointing place. The brightest sunbeam in it is a friend. Friendship halves our troubles and doubles our joys. *Have you a friend ?*

A real friend is scarce and rare. There are many who will eat, and drink, and laugh with us, in the sunshine of prosperity. There are few who will stand by

* A tract for Christmas, 1855.

us in the days of darkness,—few who will love us when we are sick, helpless, and poor,—few, above all, who will care for our souls. *Have you a real friend?*

Reader, do you want a real friend? I write to recommend one to your notice this day. I know of one “who sticketh closer than a brother.” (Prov. xviii. 24.) I know of one who is ready to be your friend for time and for eternity, if you will receive Him. Hear me, while I try to tell you something about Him.

The friend I want you to know is Jesus Christ. Happy is that Christmas party in which Christ has the foremost place!

I. Do you want *a friend in need?* Such a friend is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Man is the neediest creature on God’s earth, because he is a sinner. There is no need so great as that of sinners. Poverty, hunger, thirst, cold, sickness, all are nothing in comparison. Sinners need pardon, and they are utterly unable to provide it for themselves. They need deliverance from a guilty conscience, and the fear of death, and they have no power of their own to obtain it. This need the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to relieve. “He came into the world to save sinners.” (1 Tim. i. 15.)

We are all by nature poor dying creatures. From the king on his throne to the pauper in the workhouse, we are all sick of a mortal disease of soul. Whether we know it or not, whether we feel it or not, we are all dying daily. The plague of sin is in our blood. We cannot cure ourselves, and are hourly getting

worse and worse. All this the Lord Jesus undertook to remedy. He came into the world "to bring in health and cure." He came to deliver us "from the second death." He came "to abolish death, and bring life and immortality to light through the Gospel." (Jer. xxxiii. 6. Rev. ii. 11. 2 Tim. i. 10.)

We were all by nature imprisoned debtors. We owed our God ten thousand talents, and had nothing to pay. We were wretched bankrupts, without hope of discharging ourselves. We could never have freed ourselves from our load of liabilities, and were daily getting deeper and deeper involved. All this the Lord Jesus saw and undertook to remedy. He engaged to "ransom and redeem us." He came to "proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." "He came to redeem us from the curse of the law." (Hos. xiii. 14. Isa. lxi. 1. Gal. iii. 13.)

We were all by nature shipwrecked and cast away. We could never have reached the harbour of everlasting life. We were sinking in the midst of the waves, shiftless, hopeless, helpless, and powerless; tied and bound by the chain of our sins, foundering under the burden of our own guilt, and like to become a prey to the devil. All this the Lord Jesus saw and undertook to remedy. He came down from heaven to be our mighty "helper." He came "to seek and to save that which was lost," and to "deliver us from going down into the pit." (Psa. lxxxix. 19. Luke xix. 10. Job xxxiii. 24.)

Could we have been saved without the Lord Jesus

Christ coming down from heaven? It would have been impossible, so far as our eyes can see. The wisest men of Egypt, and Greece, and Rome never found out the way to peace with God. Without the friendship of Christ we should all have been lost for evermore in hell.

Was the Lord Jesus Christ obliged to come down to save us? Oh! no! no! It was His own free love, mercy, and pity that brought Him down. He came unsought and unasked, because He was gracious.

Reader, think on these things. Search all history from the beginning of the world. Look round the whole circle of those you know and love. You never heard of such friendship among the sons of men. There never was such a real friend in need as Jesus Christ.

II. Do you want *a friend in deed*? Such a friend is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The true extent of a man's friendship must be measured by his deeds. Tell me not what he says, and feels, and wishes. Tell me not of his words and letters. Tell me rather what he does. "Friendly is that friendly does."

Reader, the doings of the Lord Jesus Christ for man, are the grand proof of His friendly feeling towards him. Never were there such acts of kindness and self-denial as those which He has performed on our behalf. He has not loved us in word only but in deed.

For our sakes He took our nature upon Him, and was born of a woman. He who was very God, and

equal with the Father, laid aside for a season His glory and took upon Him flesh and blood like our own. The Almighty Creator of all things became a little babe like any of us, and experienced all our bodily weaknesses and infirmities, sin only excepted. "Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. viii. 9.)

For our sakes He lived thirty-three years in this evil world, despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Though He was King of kings, He had not where to lay His head. Though He was Lord of lords, He was often weary, and hungry, and thirsty, and poor. "He took on him the form of a servant, and humbled himself." (Philipp. iii. 7. 8.)

For our sakes He suffered the most painful of all deaths, even the death of the cross. Though innocent and without fault He allowed Himself to be condemned, and found guilty. He who was the Prince of Life was led as a lamb to the slaughter and poured out His soul unto death. He "died for us." (1 Thess. v. 10.)

Was He obliged to do this? Oh! No! He might have summoned to His help more than twelve legions of angels and scattered His enemies with a word. He suffered voluntarily and of His own free will, to make atonement for our sins. He knew that nothing but the sacrifice of His body and blood could ever make peace between sinful man and a Holy God. He laid down His life to pay the price of our redemption. He died that we might live. He suffered that we might reign. He bore shame that we might receive glory. "He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he

might bring us to God." "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (1 Peter iii. 18. 2 Cor. v. 21.)

Reader, such friendship as this passes man's understanding. Friends who would die for those who love them, we may have heard of sometimes. But who can find a man who would lay down his life for those that hate him? Yet this is what Jesus has done for us. "God commendeth his love, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.)

Ask all the tribes of mankind from one end of the world to the other and you will nowhere hear of a deed like this. None was ever so high and stooped down so low as Jesus the Son of God. None ever gave so costly a proof of His friendship. None ever paid so much, and endured so much to do good to others. Never was there such a friend in deed as Jesus Christ!

III. Do you want *a mighty and powerful friend*? Such a friend is Jesus Christ.

Power to help is that which few possess in this world. Many have will enough to do good to others, but no power. They feel for the sorrows of others and would gladly relieve them if they could. They can weep with their friends in affliction, but are unable to take their grief away. But though man is weak, Christ is strong. Though the best of our earthly friends is feeble, Christ is almighty. "All power is given unto him in heaven and earth." (Matt. xxviii. 18.) No one can do so much for those whom he befriends as Jesus Christ. Others can befriend their bodies a little. He

can befriend both body and soul. Others can do a little for them in time. He can be a friend both for time and eternity.

He is *able to pardon* and save the very chief of sinners. He can deliver the most guilty conscience from all its burdens and give it perfect peace with God. He can wash away the vilest stains of wickedness, and make a man whiter than snow in the sight of God. He can clothe a poor weak child of Adam in everlasting righteousness, and give him a title to heaven, that can never be overthrown. In a word, He can give any one of us peace, hope, forgiveness, and reconciliation with God, if we will only trust in Him. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." (1 John i. 7.)

He is *able to convert* the hardest of hearts, and create in man a new spirit. He can take the most thoughtless and ungodly people and give them another mind by the Holy Ghost which He puts in them. He can cause old things to pass away, and all things to become new. He can make them love the things which they once hated, and hate the things which they once loved. "He can give them power to become the sons of God." "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." (John i. 12. 2 Cor. v. 17.)

He is *able to preserve* to the end all who believe in Him, and become His disciples. He can give them grace to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, and fight a good fight to the last. He can lead them on safely in spite of every temptation, carry them home through a thousand dangers, and keep them faithful, though they stand alone and have none to help them.

"He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." (Heb. vii. 25.)

He is *able to give* those that love Him the best of gifts. He can give them in life inward comforts which money can never buy, peace in poverty, joy in sorrow, patience in suffering. He can give them in death bright hopes, which enable them to walk through the dark valley without fear. He can give them after death a crown of glory, which fadeth not away, and a reward, compared to which the Queen of England has nothing to bestow.

Reader, this is power indeed. This is true greatness. This is real strength. Go and look at the poor Hindoo idolater, seeking peace in vain by afflicting his body, and after fifty years of self-imposed suffering, unable to find it. Go and look at the benighted Romanist giving money to his priest to pray for his soul, and yet dying without comfort. Go and look at rich men spending thousands in search of happiness, and yet always discontented and unhappy. Then turn to Jesus and think what He can do, and is daily doing for all who trust Him. Think how He heals all the broken-hearted, comforts all the sick, cheers all the poor that trust in Him, and supplies all their daily need. The fear of man is strong. The opposition of this evil world is mighty. The lusts of the flesh rage horribly. The fear of death is terrible. The devil is a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. But Jesus is stronger than them all. Jesus can make us conquerors over all these foes. And then say whether it be not true, that there never was so mighty a friend as Jesus Christ. ,

IV. Do you want *a loving and affectionate friend*? Such a friend is Jesus Christ.

Kindness is the very essence of true friendship. Money and advice and help lose half their grace if not given in a loving manner. What kind of love is that of the Lord Jesus toward man? It is called "a love that passeth knowledge." (Ephes. iii. 19.)

Love shines forth in His *reception of sinners*. He refuses none that come to Him for salvation, however unworthy they may be. Though their lives may have been most wicked,—though their sins may be more in number than the stars of heaven, the Lord Jesus is ready to receive them, and give them pardon and peace. There is no end to His compassion. There are no bounds to His pity. He is not ashamed to befriend those whom the world casts off as hopeless. There are none too bad, too filthy, and too much diseased with sin, to be admitted into His home. He is willing to be the friend of any sinner. He has kindness and mercy and healing medicine for all. He has long proclaimed this to be His rule: "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.)

Love shines forth in His *dealings with sinners*, after they have believed in Him and become His friends. He is very patient with them, though their conduct is often very trying and provoking. He is never tired of hearing their complaints, however often they may come to Him. He sympathizes deeply in all their sorrows. He knows what pain is. He is acquainted with grief. In all their afflictions He is afflicted. He never allows them to be tempted above what they are able to bear.

He supplies them with daily grace for their daily conflict. Their poor services are acceptable to Him. He is as well pleased with them as a parent is with his child's endeavours to speak and walk. He has caused it to be written in His book, that "He taketh pleasure in His people," and that "He taketh pleasure in them that fear him." (Psalm cxlvii. 11; cxlix. 4.)

Ah! reader, there is no love on earth that can be named together with this. We love those in whom we see something that deserves our affection, or those who are our bone or our flesh. The Lord Jesus loves sinners in whom there is no good thing. We love those from whom we get some return for our affection. The Lord Jesus loves those who can do little or nothing for Him compared to what He does for them. We love where we can give some reason for loving. The great Friend of sinners draws His reasons out of His own everlasting compassion. His love is purely disinterested, purely unselfish, purely free. Never, never was there so truly loving a friend as Jesus Christ.

V. Do you want a *wise and prudent friend*? Such a friend is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Man's friendship is sadly blind. He often injures those he loves by injudicious kindness. He often errs in the counsel he gives. He often leads his friends into trouble by bad advice, even when he means to help them. He sometimes keeps them back from the way of life, and entangles them in the vanities of the world, when they have well nigh escaped. The friendship of the Lord Jesus is not so. It always does us good and never evil.

The Lord Jesus *never spoils* His friends by extravagant indulgence. He gives them everything that is really for their benefit. He withholds nothing from them that is really good. But He requires them to take up their cross daily and follow Him. He bids them endure hardships as good soldiers. He calls on them to fight the good fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil. His people often dislike it at the time and think it hard. But when they reach heaven they will see it was all well done.

The Lord Jesus *makes no mistakes* in managing His friends' affairs. He orders all their concerns with perfect wisdom. All things happen to them at the right time, and in the right way. He gives them as much of sickness and as much of health,—as much of poverty and as much of riches,—as much of sorrow and as much of joy, as He sees their souls require. He leads them by the right way to bring them to the city of habitation. (Psal. cvii. 7.) He mixes their bitterest cups like a wise physician, and takes care that they have not a drop too little or too much. His people often misunderstand His dealings. They are silly enough to fancy their course of life might have been better ordered. But in the resurrection day they will thank God that not their will, but Christ's was done.

Reader, look round the world and see the harm which people are continually getting from their friends. Mark how much more ready men are to encourage one another in worldliness and levity, than to provoke to love and good works. Think how often they meet together, not for the better but for the worse,—not to

quicken one another's souls in the way to heaven, but to confirm one another in the love of this present world. Alas! there are thousands who are wounded unexpectedly in the house of their friends!

And then turn to the great Friend of sinners, and see how different a thing is His friendship from that of man. Listen to Him as He walks by the way with His disciples. Mark how He comforts, reproves, and exhorts with perfect wisdom. Observe how He times His visits to those He loves, as to Mary and Martha at Bethany. Hear how He converses, as He dines on the shore of the sea of Galilee, "Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me." (John xxi. 16.) His company is always sanctifying. His gifts are always for our soul's good. His kindness is always wise. His friendship is always to edification. One day of the Son of Man is better than a thousand in the society of earthly friends. One hour spent in private communion with Him, is better than a year in kings' palaces. Never, never, was there such a wise friend as Jesus Christ.

VI. Do you want a *tried and proved friend*? Such a friend is Jesus Christ.

Six thousand years have passed away since the Lord Jesus began His work of befriending mankind. During that long period of time He has had many friends in this world. Millions on millions, unhappily, have refused His offers and been miserably lost for ever. But thousands on thousands have enjoyed the mighty privilege of His friendship and been saved. He has had great experience.

He has had friends of *every rank and station* in life. Some of them were kings and rich men, like David, and Solomon, and Hezekiah, and Job. Some of them were very poor in this world, like the shepherds of Bethlehem, and James, and John, and Andrew. But they were all alike Christ's friends.

He has had friends of *every age* that man can pass through. Some of them never knew Him till they were advanced in years, like Manasseh, and Zacchæus, and the Ethiopian Eunuch. Some of them were His friends even from their earliest childhood, like Joseph, and Samuel, and Josiah, and Timothy. But they were all alike Christ's friends.

He has had friends of *every possible temperament and disposition*. Some of them were simple plain men, like Isaac. Some of them were mighty in word and deed, like Moses. Some of them were fervent and warm-hearted, like Peter. Some of them were gentle and retiring spirits, like John. Some of them were active and stirring, like Martha. Some of them loved to sit quietly at His feet, like Mary. Some dwelt unknown among their own people, like the Shunamite. Some have gone everywhere and turned the world upside down, like Paul. But they were all alike Christ's friends.

He has had friends of *every condition in life*. Some of them were married and had sons and daughters, like Enoch. Some of them lived and died unmarried, like Daniel and John the Baptist. Some of them were often sick, like Lazarus and Epaphroditus. Some of them were strong to labour, like Persis, and Tryphena, and Tryphosa. Some of them were masters, like

Abraham and Cornelius. Some of them were servants, like the saints in Nero's household. Some of them had bad servants, like Elisha. Some of them had bad masters, like Obadiah. Some of them had bad wives and children, like David. But they were alike Christ's friends.

He has had friends *of almost every nation, and people, and tongue*. He has had friends in hot countries and in cold; friends among nations highly civilized, and friends among the simplest and rudest tribes. His book of life contains the names of Greeks and Romans, of Jews and Egyptians, of bond and of free. There are to be found on its lists reserved Englishmen and cautious Scotchmen, impulsive Irishmen and fiery Welchmen, volatile Frenchmen and dignified Spaniards, refined Italians and solid Germans, rude Africans and refined Hindoos, cultivated Chinese and half-savage New Zealanders. But they were all alike Christ's friends.

All these have made trial of Christ's friendship, and proved it to be good. They all found nothing wanting when they began. They all found nothing wanting as they went on. No lack, no defect, no deficiency was ever found by any one of them in Jesus Christ. Each found his own soul's wants fully supplied. Each found every day, that in Christ there was enough and to spare. Never, never was there a friend so fully tried and proved as Jesus Christ.

VII. Last, but not least, do you want *an unfailing friend*? Such a friend is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The saddest part of all the good things of earth, is their instability. Riches make themselves wings and

flee away. Youth and beauty are but for a few years. Strength of body soon decays. Mind and intellect are soon exhausted. All is perishing. All is fading. All is passing away. But there is one splendid exception to this general rule, and that is the friendship of Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus is *a friend who never changes*. There is no fickleness about Him. Those whom He loves, He loves unto the end. Husbands have been known to forsake their wives. Parents have been known to cast off their children. Human vows and promises of faithfulness have often been forgotten. Thousands have been neglected in their poverty and old age, who were honoured by all when they were rich and young. But Christ never changed His feelings toward one of His friends. He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." (Heb. xiii. 8.)

The Lord Jesus *never goes away from His friends*. There is never a parting and good-bye between Him and His people. From the time that He makes His abode in a sinner's heart, He abides in it for ever. The world is full of leaye-takings and departures. Death and the lapse of time break up the most united family. Sons go forth to make their way in life. Daughters are married and leave their father's house for ever. Scattering, scattering, scattering, is the yearly history of the happiest home. How many we have tearfully watched as they drove away from our doors, whose pleasant faces we have never seen again! How many we have sorrowfully followed to the grave, and then come back to a cold, silent, lonely, and blank fireside! But thanks be to God! there is One who never

leaves His friends. The Lord Jesus is He who has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." (Heb. xiii. 5.)

The Lord Jesus *goes with His friends wherever they go*. There is no possible separation between Him and those whom He loves. There is no place or position on earth or under the earth that can divide them from the great Friend of their souls. When the path of duty calls them far away from home, He is their companion. When they pass through the fire and water of fierce tribulation, He is with them. When they lie down on the bed of sickness, He stands by them, and makes all their trouble work for good. When they go down the valley of the shadow of death, and friends and relatives stand still and can go no further, He goes down by their side. When they wake up in the unknown world of Paradise, they are still with Him. When they rise with a new body at the judgment day, they will not be alone. He will own them for His friends, and say, "they are mine, deliver them and let them go free." He will make good His own words, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 20.)

Reader, look round the world and see how failure is written on all man's schemes. Count up the partings, and separations, and disappointments, and bereavements which have happened under your own knowledge. Think what a privilege it is that there is One at least who never fails, and in whom no one was ever disappointed! Never, never was there so unfailing a friend as Jesus Christ.

And now, reader, suffer me to conclude this tract with a few plain words of application to your own case. I know not who you are or in what state your soul may

be. But I am sure that the words I am about to say deserve your serious attention. Oh! that the gatherings of Christmas may not find you heedless of spiritual things! Oh! that you may be able at Christmas to give a few thoughts to Christ!

1. Know then, for one thing, that I call upon you to *consider solemnly whether Christ is your Friend, and you are His.*

There are thousands on thousands, I grieve to say, who are not Christ's friends. Baptized in His name, outward members of His church, attendants on His means of grace,—all this they are no doubt. But they are not Christ's friends. Do they hate the sins which Jesus died to put away? No. Do they love the Saviour who came into the world to save them? No. Do they care for the souls which were so precious in His sight? No. Do they delight in the word of reconciliation? No. Do they try to speak with the Friend of sinners in prayer? No. Do they seek close fellowship with Him? No. Oh, reader, is this your case. How is it with you? Are you or are you not one of Christ's friends?

2. Know, in the next place, that *if you are not one of Christ's friends, you are a poor, miserable man.*

I write this down deliberately. I do not say it without thought. I say that if Christ be not your friend, you are a poor, miserable man.

You are in the midst of a failing, sorrowful world, and you have no real source of comfort, or refuge for a time of need. You are a dying creature, and you are

not ready to die. You have sins, and they are not forgiven. You are going to be judged, and you are not prepared to meet God. You might be, but you refuse to use the one only Mediator and Advocate. You love the world better than Christ. You refuse the great Friend of sinners, and you have no friend in heaven to plead your cause. Yes! it is sadly true. You are a poor, miserable man. It matters nothing what your income is. Without Christ's friendship you are very poor.

3. Know, in the third place, that *if you really want a friend, Christ is willing to become your friend.*

He has long wanted you to join His people, and He now invites you by my hand. He is ready to receive you, all unworthy as you may feel, and to write your name down in the list of His friends. He is ready to pardon all the past, to clothe you with righteousness, to give you His Spirit, to make you His own dear child. All He asks you to do is to come to Him.

He bids you come with all your sins, only acknowledging your vileness, and confessing that you are ashamed. Just as you are,—waiting for nothing,—unworthy of anything in yourself,—Jesus bids you come and be His friend.

Ah! reader, come and be wise. Come and be safe. Come and be happy. Come and be Christ's friend.

4. Know, in the last place, that *if Christ is your friend, you have great privileges, and ought to walk worthy of them.*

Seek every day to have closer communion with Him who is your Friend, and to know more of His grace and

power. True Christianity is not merely the believing a certain set of dry abstract propositions. It is to live in daily personal communication with an actual living person, Jesus, the Son of God. "To me," said Paul, "to live is Christ." (Phil. i. 21.)

Seek every day to glorify your Lord and Saviour in all your ways. He that hath a friend should show himself friendly, and no man surely is under such mighty obligations as the friend of Christ. Avoid everything which would grieve your Lord. Fight hard against besetting sins, against inconsistency, against backwardness to confess Him before men. Say to your soul, whenever you are tempted to that which is wrong, "Soul, soul, is this thy kindness to thy friend?"

Think, above all, of the mercy which has been shown thee, and learn to rejoice daily in thy Friend! What though thy body be bowed down with disease! What though thy poverty and trials be very great! What though thine earthly friends forsake thee, and thou art alone in the world! All this may be true, but if thou art in Christ, thou hast a Friend, a mighty Friend, a loving Friend, a wise Friend, a Friend that never fails. Oh! think, think much upon thy Friend!

Yet a little time, and thy Friend shall come to take thee home, and thou shalt dwell with Him for ever. Yet a little time, and thou shalt see as thou hast been seen, and know as thou hast been known. And then thou shalt hear assembled worlds confess, that HE IS THE RICH AND HAPPY MAN WHO HAS HAD CHRIST FOR HIS FRIEND.

Are You Happy?

Reader,

You see the question which forms the title of this tract. Now listen to a simple story.

An infidel was once addressing a crowd of people in the open air. He was trying to persuade them that there was no God and no devil, no heaven, and no hell, no resurrection, no judgment, and no life to come. He advised them to throw away their Bibles, and not to mind what parsons said. He recommended them to think as he did, and to be like him. He talked boldly. The crowd listened eagerly. It was the blind leading the blind. Both were falling into the ditch.

In the middle of his address a poor old woman suddenly pushed her way through the crowd, to the place where he was standing. She stood before him. She looked him full in the face. "Sir," she said, in a loud voice, "Are you happy?" The infidel looked scornfully at her, and gave her no answer. "Sir," she said again, "I ask you to answer my question. Are you happy? You want us to throw away our Bibles. You

tell us not to believe what parsons say about religion. You advise us to think as you do, and be like you. Now, before we take your advice, we have a right to know what good we shall get by it. Do your fine new notions give you much comfort? Do you yourself really feel happy?"

The infidel stopped, and attempted to answer the old woman's question. He stammered, and shuffled, and fidgetted, and endeavoured to explain his meaning. He tried hard to turn the subject. He said, "he had not come there to preach about happiness." But it was of no use. The old woman stuck to her point. She insisted on her question being answered, and the crowd took her part. She pressed him hard with her inquiry, and would take no excuse. And at last the infidel was obliged to leave the ground, and sneak off in confusion. He could not reply to the question. His conscience would not let him. He dared not say that he was happy.

Reader, the old woman showed great wisdom in asking the question that she did. The argument she used may seem very simple, but in reality it is one of the most powerful that can be employed. It is a weapon that has more effect on some minds than the most elaborate reasoning of Butler, or Paley, or Chalmers. Whenever a man begins to take up new views of religion, and pretends to despise old Bible Christianity, thrust home at his conscience the old woman's question. Ask him whether his new views make him feel comfortable within. Ask him whether he can say with honesty and sincerity that he is happy. The grand test

of a man's faith and religion is, "does it make him happy?"

Let me now affectionately invite you to consider the subject of this tract. Let me entreat you to prove your own life and your own religion, by the question which stands before your eyes. Let me warn you to remember that the salvation of your soul, and nothing less, is closely bound up with the inquiry. That heart cannot be right in the sight of God, which knows nothing of happiness. That man or woman cannot be in a safe state of soul, who feels nothing of peace within.

There are three things which I purpose to do, in order to clear up the subject of this tract. I ask your special attention to each one of them. And I pray the Spirit of God to apply all to your soul.

I. Let me point out some things which are absolutely essential to all happiness.

II. Let me expose some common mistakes about the way to be happy.

III. Let me show you the real way to be truly happy.

I. First of all I have to *point out some things which are absolutely essential to all true happiness.*

Happiness is what all mankind want to obtain. The desire of it is deeply planted in the human heart. All men naturally dislike pain, sorrow, and discomfort. All men naturally like ease, comfort, and gladness. All men naturally hunger and thirst after happiness. Just as the sick man longs for health, and the prisoner of war for liberty,—just as the parched traveller in hot

countries longs to see the cooling fountain, or the ice-bound polar voyager the sun rising above the horizon,—just in the same way does poor mortal man long to be happy. But alas! how few consider what they really mean when they talk of happiness! How vague and indistinct and undefined the ideas of most men are upon the subject! They think some are happy, who in reality are miserable. They think some are gloomy and sad, who in reality are truly happy. They dream of a happiness which in reality would never satisfy their nature's wants. Let me try this day to throw a little light on the subject.

True happiness *is not perfect freedom from sorrow and discomfort*. Let that never be forgotten. If it were so, there would be no such thing as happiness in the world. Such happiness is for angels who have never fallen, and not for man. The happiness I am inquiring about is such as a poor, dying, sinful creature may hope to attain. Our whole nature is defiled by sin. Evil abounds in the world. Sickness, and death, and change are daily doing their sad work on every side. In such a state of things, the highest happiness man can attain to on earth, must necessarily be a mixed thing. If we expect to find any literally perfect happiness on this side of the grave, we expect what we shall not find.

True happiness *does not consist in laughter and smiles*. The face is very often a poor index of the inward man. There are thousands who laugh loud and are merry as a grasshopper in company, but are wretched and miserable in private, and almost afraid to be alone. There are hundreds who are grave and serious in their demeanour,

whose hearts are full of solid peace. A poet of our own has truly told us, that smiles are worth but little.

“A man may smile and smile and be a villain.”

And the eternal word of God teaches us, that “even in laughter the heart is sorrowful.” (Prov. xiv. 13.) Tell me not merely of smiling and laughing faces. I want to hear of something more than that, when I ask whether a man is happy. A truly happy man no doubt will often shew his happiness in his countenance. But a man may have a very merry face, and yet not be happy at all.

Of all deceptive things on earth nothing is so deceptive as mere gaiety and merriment. It is a hollow empty show, utterly devoid of substance and reality. Listen to the brilliant talker in society, and mark the applause which he receives from an admiring company. Follow him to his own private room, and you will very likely find him plunged in melancholy despondency. Colonel Gardiner confessed, that even when he was thought most happy, he often wished he was a dog.—Look at the smiling beauty in the ball-room, and you might suppose she knew not what it was to be unhappy. See her next day at her own home, and you may probably find her out of temper with herself and every body else besides.—Oh! No! worldly merriment is not real happiness. There is a certain pleasure about it, I do not deny. There is an animal excitement about it, I make no question. There is a temporary elevation of spirits about it, I freely concede. But call it not by the sacred name of happiness. The most beautiful cut

flowers stuck into the ground do not make a garden. When glass is called diamond, and tinsel is called gold, then, and not till then, your people who can laugh and smile will deserve to be called happy men.*

To be truly happy *the highest wants of a man's nature must be met and satisfied*. The requirements of his curiously wrought constitution must all be filled up. There must be nothing about him that cries, "give, give," but cries in vain and gets no answer. The horse and the ox are happy as long as they are warmed and filled. And why? It is because they are satisfied. The little infant looks happy when it is clothed, and fed, and well, and in its mother's arms. And why? Because it is satisfied. And just so it is with man. His highest wants must be met and satisfied, before he can be truly happy. All must be filled up. There must be no void, no empty places, no unsupplied cravings. Till then he is never truly happy.

* Cervantes, author of Don Quixote, at a time when all Spain was laughing at his humorous work, was overwhelmed with a deep cloud of melancholy.

Molière, the first of French comic writers, carried into his domestic circle a sadness which the greatest worldly prosperity could never dispel.

Samuel Foote, the noted wit of the last century, died of a broken heart.

Theodore Hooke, the facetious novel writer, who could set everybody laughing, says of himself in his diary, "I am suffering under a constant depression of spirits, which no one who sees me in society dreams of."

A woebegone stranger consulted a physician about his health. The physician advised him to keep up his spirits, by going to hear the great comic actor of the day. "You should go and hear Matthews. He would make you well." "Alas! Sir," was the reply, "I am Matthews himself." (*Pictorial Pages.*)

And what are *man's principal wants*? Has he a body only? No! he has something more. He has a soul.—Has he sensual faculties only? Can he do nothing but hear, and see, and smell, and taste, and feel? No! he has a thinking mind, and a conscience.—Has he no consciousness of any world but that in which he lives and moves? He has. There is a still small voice within him which often makes itself heard,—“this life is not all; there is a world unseen; there is a life beyond the grave.”—Yes! it is true. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. All men know it. All men feel it, if they would only speak the truth. It is utter nonsense to pretend that food and raiment, and earthly good things alone can make men happy. There are soul-wants. There are conscience-wants. There can be no true happiness, until these wants are satisfied.

To be truly happy *a man must have sources of gladness which are not dependent on anything in this world.* There is nothing upon earth which is not stamped with the mark of instability and uncertainty. All the good things that money can buy are but for a moment. They either leave us, or we are obliged to leave them. All the sweetest relationships in life are liable to come to an end. Death may come any day and cut them off. The man whose happiness depends entirely on things here below, is like him who builds his house on sand, or leans his weight on a reed.

Tell me not of your happiness, if it daily hangs on the uncertainties of earth. Your home may be rich in comforts. Your wife and children may be all you could desire. Your means may be amply sufficient to

meet all your wants. But oh! remember, if you have nothing more than this to look to, that you stand on the brink of a precipice. Your rivers of pleasure may any day be dried up. Your joy may be deep and earnest, but it is fearfully short-lived. It has no root. It is not true happiness.

To be really happy *a man must be able to look on every side without uncomfortable feelings.* He must be able to look back to the past without guilty fears. He must be able to look around him without discontent. He must be able to look forward without anxious dread. He must be able to sit down and think calmly about things past, present, and to come, and feel prepared. The man who has a weak side in his condition,—a side that he does not like looking at, or considering,—that man is not really happy.

Talk not to me of your happiness, if you are unable to look steadily either before or behind you. Your present position may be easy and pleasant. You may find many sources of joy and gladness in your profession, your dwelling-place, your family, and your friends. Your health may be good. Your spirits may be cheerful.—But stop and think quietly over your past life. Can you reflect calmly on all the omissions and commissions of by-gone years? How will they bear God's inspection? How will you answer for them at the last day?—And then look forward and think on the years yet to come. Think of the certain end towards which you are hastening. Think of death. Think of judgment. Think of the hour when you will meet God face to face. Are you ready for it? Are you pre-

pared? Can you look forward to these things without alarm? Oh! be very sure if you cannot look comfortably at any season but the present, your boasted happiness is a poor unreal thing. It is but a whitened sepulchre,—fair and beautiful without, but bones and corruption within. It is a mere thing of a day, like Jonah's gourd. It is not real happiness.

Reader, I ask you to fix in your mind the account of things essential to happiness, which I have attempted to give. Dismiss from your thoughts the many mistaken notions which pass current on this subject, like counterfeit coin. To be truly happy, the wants of your soul and conscience must be satisfied. To be truly happy, your joy must be founded on something more than this world can give you. To be truly happy, you must be able to look on every side,—above, below, behind, before,—and feel that all is right. This is real, sterling, genuine happiness. This is the happiness I have in view, when I urge on your notice the question of this tract.

Pause and consider well, whether you know what the first principles of true happiness are. Until you know them, you are not capable of examining the solemn question, "ARE YOU HAPPY?"

II. In the next place *let me expose some common mistakes about the way to be happy.*

There are several roads which are thought by many to lead to happiness. In each of these roads thousands and tens of thousands of men and women are continually travelling. Each fancies that if he could only

attain all he wants he would be happy. Each fancies, if he does not succeed, that the fault is not in his road, but in his own want of luck and good fortune. And all alike seem ignorant that they are hunting shadows. They have started in a wrong direction. They are seeking that which can never be found in the place where they seek it.

Suffer me, reader, to mention by name some of the principal delusions about happiness. I do it in love, and charity, and compassion to your soul. I believe it to be a public duty to warn people against cheats, quacks, and impostors. Oh ! how much trouble and sorrow it might save your heart, if you would only believe what I am going to say.

It is an utter mistake to suppose that *rank and greatness alone* can give happiness. The kings and rulers of this world are not necessarily happy men. They have troubles and crosses, which none know but themselves. They see a thousand evils, which they are unable to remedy. They are slaves working in golden chains, and have less real liberty than any in the world. They have burdens and responsibilities laid upon them, which are a daily weight on their hearts. The Roman Emperor Antonine often said, that "the imperial power was an ocean of miseries." Queen Elizabeth, when she heard a milk-maid singing, wished that she had been born to a lot like her's. Never did our great Poet write a truer word, than when he said,

"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

It is an utter mistake to suppose that *riches alone* can

give happiness. They can enable a man to command and possess everything but inward peace. They cannot buy a cheerful spirit and a light heart. There is care in the getting of them, and care in the keeping of them, care in the using of them, and care in the disposing of them, care in the gathering, and care in the scattering of them. Oh! he was a wise man who said that "money" was only another name for "trouble," and that the same English letters which spelt "acres" would also spell "cares."

It is an utter mistake to suppose that *learning and science alone* can give happiness. They may occupy a man's time and attention, but they cannot really make him happy. They that increase knowledge often increase sorrow. The more they learn, the more they discover their own ignorance. It is not in the power of things on earth or under the earth to "minister to a mind diseased." The heart wants something as well as the head. The conscience needs food as well as the intellect. All the secular knowledge in the world will not give a man joy and gladness, when he thinks on sickness, and death, and the grave. They that have climbed the highest, have often found themselves solitary, dissatisfied, and empty of peace. The learned Selden at the close of his life confessed, that all his learning did not give him such comfort as four verses of St. Paul. Titus ii. 11.—14.

It is an utter mistake to suppose that *idleness alone* can give happiness. The labourer who gets up at five in the morning, and goes out to work all day in a cold clay ditch, often thinks, as he walks past the rich

man's door, "what a fine thing it must be to have no work to do." Poor fellow! he little knows what he thinks. The most miserable creature on earth is the man who has nothing to do. Work for the hands or work for the head is absolutely essential to human happiness. Without it the mind feeds upon itself, and the whole inward man becomes diseased. The machinery within *will* work, and without something to work upon, will often wear itself to pieces. There was no idleness in Paradise. Adam and Eve had to "dress the garden and keep it." There will be no idleness in heaven. God's "servants shall serve Him." Oh! be very sure the idlest man is the man most truly unhappy.

It is an utter mistake to suppose that *pleasure-seeking and amusement alone* can give happiness. Of all roads that men can take in order to be happy, this is the one that is most completely wrong. Of all weary, flat, dull, and unprofitable ways of spending life this exceeds all. To think of a dying creature, with an immortal soul, expecting happiness in feasting and revelling,—in dancing and singing,—in dressing and visiting,—in ball-going and card-playing,—in races and fairs,—in hunting and shooting,—in crowds, in laughter, in noise, in music, in wine! Surely it is a sight that is enough to make the devil laugh and the angels weep. Even a child will not play with its toys all day long. It must have food. But when grown up men and women think to find happiness in a constant round of amusement, they sink far below a child.

Reader, I place before you these common mistakes

about the way to be happy. I ask you to mark them well. I warn you plainly against these pretended short cuts to happiness, however crowded they may be. I tell you that if you fancy any one of them can lead you to true peace, you are entirely deceived. Your conscience will never feel satisfied. Your immortal soul will never feel easy. Your whole inward man will feel uncomfortable and out of health. Take any one of these roads, or take all of them, and if you have nothing besides to look to, you will never find happiness. You may travel on and on and on, and the wished for object will seem as far away at the end of each stage of life as when you started. You are like one pouring water into a sieve, or putting money into a bag with holes. You might as well try to make an elephant happy by feeding him with a grain of sand a day, as try to satisfy that heart of yours with rank, riches, learning, idleness, or pleasure.

Do you doubt the truth of all I am saying? I dare say you do. Then let us turn to the great book of human experience, and read over a few lines out of its solemn pages. You shall have the testimony of a few competent witnesses on the great subject I am urging on your attention.

A king shall be our first witness; I mean Solomon king of Israel. We know that he had power, and wisdom, and wealth, far exceeding that of any ruler of his time. We know from his own confession that he tried the great experiment, how far the good things of this world can make man happy. We know from the record of his own hand the result of this curious experiment.

He writes it by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, for the benefit of the whole world, in the book of Ecclesiastes. Never, surely, was the experiment tried under such favourable circumstances. Never was any one so likely to succeed as the Jewish king. Yet what is Solomon's testimony? You have it in his melancholy words, "all is vanity and vexation of spirit." (Eccles. i. 14.)

A famous French lady shall be our next witness; I mean Madame De Pompadour. She was the friend and favourite of Louis the Fifteenth. She had unbounded influence at the court of France. She wanted nothing that money could procure. Yet what does she say herself? "What a situation is that of the great! They only live in the future, and are only happy in hope. There is no peace in ambition. I am always gloomy and often so unreasonably. The kindness of the king, the regard of courtiers, the attachment of my domestics, and the fidelity of a large number of friends,—motives like these, which ought to make me happy, affect me no longer. I have no longer inclinations for all which once pleased me. I have caused my house at Paris to be magnificently furnished; well! it pleased for two days. My residence at Bellevue is charming; and I alone cannot endure it. Benevolent people relate to me all the news and adventures of Paris; they think I listen, but when they have done, I ask them what they said. In a word, I do not live: I am dead before my time. I have no interest in the world. Everything conspires to embitter my life. My life is a continual death." To such testimony I need not add

a single word. (*Sinclair's Anecdotes and Aphorisms.* p. 33.)

A famous German writer shall be our next witness ; I mean Goethe. It was well known that he was almost idolized by many during his life. His works were read and admired by thousands. His name was known and honoured, wherever German was read all over the world. And yet the praise of man, of which he reaped such an abundant harvest, was utterly unable to make Goethe happy. "He confessed, when about eighty years old, that he could not remember being in a really happy state of mind even for a few weeks together, and that when he wished to feel happy, he had to veil his self-consciousness." (*See Sinclair's Anecdotes and Aphorisms.* p. 280.)

An English peer and poet shall be our next witness ; I mean Lord Byron. If ever there was one who ought to have been happy, according to the standard of the world, Lord Byron was the man. He began life with all the advantages of English rank and position. He had splendid abilities and powers of mind, which the world soon discovered, and was ready to honour. He had a sufficiency of means to gratify every lawful wish, and never knew anything of real poverty. Humanly speaking, there seemed nothing to prevent him enjoying life and being happy. Yet it is a notorious fact, that Byron was a miserable man. Misery stands out in his poems. Misery creeps out in his letters. Weariness, satiety, disgust, and discontent appear in all his ways. He is an awful warning that rank, and title, and literary fame alone, are not sufficient to make a man happy.

A man of science shall be our next witness ; I mean Sir Humphrey Davy. Here was a man eminently successful in the line of life which he chose, and deservedly so. A distinguished philosopher,—the inventor of the famous safety-lamp which bears his name, and has preserved so many poor miners from death by fire-damp,—a baronet of the United Kingdom and President of the Royal Society ;—his whole life seemed a continual career of prosperity. If learning alone were the road to happiness, this man at least ought to have been happy. Yet what was the true record of Davy's feelings ? We have it in his own melancholy journal at the latter part of his life. He describes himself in two painful words, "very miserable !"

A man of wit and pleasure shall be our next witness ; I mean Lord Chesterfield. He shall speak for himself. His own words in a letter shall be his testimony. "I have seen the silly round of business and pleasure, and have done with it all. I have enjoyed all the pleasures of the world, and consequently know their futility, and do not regret their loss. I appraise them at their real value, which in truth is very low ; whereas those who have not experienced always overrate them. They only see their gay outside, and are dazzled with their glare, but I have been behind the scenes. I have seen all the coarse pulleys and dirty ropes which exhibit and move the gaudy machine ; and I have seen and smelt the tallow candles which illuminate the whole decoration, to the astonishment and admiration of the ignorant audience. When I reflect on what I have seen, what I have heard, and what I have done, I cannot persuade

myself that all that frivolous hurry of bustle and pleasure of the world had any reality. I look on all that is past as one of those romantic dreams which opium occasions, and I do by no means wish to repeat the nauseous dose for the sake of the fugitive dream." These sentences speak for themselves. I need not add to them one single word.

The statesmen and politicians who have swayed the destinies of the world, ought by good right to be our last witnesses. But I forbear in Christian charity to bring them forward. It makes my heart ache when I run my eye over the list of names famous in English history, and think how many have worn out their lives in a breathless struggle after place and distinction. How many of our greatest men have died of broken hearts, disappointed, disgusted, and tired with constant failure! How many have left on record some humbling confession that in the plenitude of their power they were pining for rest, as the caged eagle for liberty! How many whom the world is applauding as "masters of the situation," are in reality little better than galley slaves chained to the oar, and unable to get free! Alas! there are many sad proofs both among the living and the dead, that to be great and powerful is not necessarily to be happy.

Reader, I think it very likely that you do not believe what I am saying. I know something of the deceitfulness of the heart on the subject of happiness. There are few things which man is so slow to believe, as the truths I am now putting forth about the way to be happy. Bear with me then, while I say something more.

Come and stand with me some afternoon in the heart of the city of London. Let us watch the faces of most of the wealthy men, whom we shall see leaving their houses of business at the close of the day. Some of them are worth hundreds of thousands. Some of them are worth millions of pounds. But what is written in the countenances of these grave men whom we see swarming out from Lombard Street and Corn Hill, from the Bank of England and the Stock Exchange? What mean those deep lines which furrow so many a cheek and so many a brow? What means that air of anxious thoughtfulness which is worn by five out of every six we meet? Ah! reader, these things tell a tale. They tell us that it needs something more than gold and bank notes to make men happy.

Come next and stand with me near the Houses of Parliament, in the middle of a busy session. Let us scan the faces of peers and commoners, whose names are familiar and well-known all over the civilized world. There you may see on some fine May evening the mightiest statesmen in England hurrying to a debate, like eagles to the carcase. Each has a power of good or evil in his tongue which it is fearful to contemplate. Each may say things before to-morrow's sun dawns which may affect the peace and prosperity of nations, and convulse the world. There you may see the men who hold the reins of power and government already. There you may see the men who are daily watching for an opportunity of snatching those reins out of their hands, and governing in their stead. But what do their faces tell us, as they hasten to their posts? What may

be learned from their care-worn countenances? What may be read in many of their wrinkled foreheads, so absent-looking and sunk in thought? Ah! reader, they teach us a solemn lesson. They teach us that it needs something more than political greatness to make men happy.

Come next and stand with me in the most fashionable part of London, in the height of the season. Let us visit Regent Street or Pall Mall, Hyde Park or May Fair. How many fair faces and splendid equipages we shall see! How many we shall count up in an hour's time, who seem to possess the choicest gifts of this world,—beauty, wealth, rank, fashion, and troops of friends! But alas! how few we shall see who appear happy! In how many countenances we shall read weariness, dissatisfaction, discontent, sorrow, or unhappiness, as clearly as if it was written with a pen. Yes! it is a humbling lesson to learn, but a very wholesome one. It needs something more than rank, and fashion, and beauty to make people happy.

Come next and walk with me through some quiet country parish in merry England. Let us visit some secluded corner in our beautiful old father-land, far away from great towns, and fashionable dissipation, and political strife. There are not a few such to be found in the land. There are rural parishes where there is neither street, nor public house, nor beershop,—where there is work for all the labourers, and a church for all the population, and a school for all the children, and a minister of the Gospel to look after the people. Surely, you will say, we shall find happiness here! Surely such parishes must be the very abode of peace and joy!

Go into those quiet-looking cottages one by one, and you will soon be undeceived. Learn the inner history of each family, and you will soon alter your mind. You will soon discover that backbiting, and lying, and slandering, and envy, and jealousy, and pride, and laziness, and drinking, and extravagance, and lust, and petty quarrels, can murder happiness in the country quite as much as in the town. No doubt a rural village sounds pretty in poetry, and looks beautiful in pictures. But in sober reality human nature is the same evil thing everywhere. Alas! it needs something more than a residence in a quiet country parish, to make any child of Adam a happy man.

I know these are ancient things. They have been said a thousand times before without effect, and I suppose they will be said without effect again. I want no greater proof of the corruption of human nature than the pertinacity with which we seek happiness where happiness cannot be found. Century after century wise men have left on record their experience about the way to be happy. Century after century the children of men will have it, that they know the way perfectly well, and need no teaching. They cast to the winds our warnings. They rush every one on his own favourite path. They walk in a vain shadow and disquiet themselves in vain, and wake up when too late to find their whole life has been a grand mistake. Their eyes are blinded. They will not see that their visions are as baseless and disappointing as the mirage of the African desert. Like the tired traveller in those deserts, they think they are approaching a

lake of cooling waters.—Like the same traveller, they find to their dismay that this fancied lake was a splendid optical delusion, and that they are still helpless in the midst of burning sands.

Reader, are you a young person? I entreat you to accept the affectionate warning of a minister of the Gospel, and not to seek happiness where happiness cannot be found. Seek it not in riches. Seek it not in power and rank. Seek it not in pleasure. Seek it not in learning. All these are bright and splendid fountains. Their waters taste sweet. A crowd is standing round them, which will not leave them. But, Oh! remember that God has written over each of these fountains, "He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again." Remember this, and be wise.

Reader, are you poor? Are you tempted to fancy that if you had the rich man's place you would be quite happy? Resist the temptation, and cast it behind you. Envy not your wealthy neighbours. Be content with such things as you have. Happiness does not depend on houses or land. Silks and satins cannot shut out sorrow from the heart. Castles and halls cannot prevent anxiety and care coming in at their doors. There is as much misery riding and driving about in carriages as there is walking about on foot. There is as much unhappiness in ceiled houses as in humble cottages. Oh! remember the mistakes which are common about happiness, and be wise.

III. Let me now, in the last place, *point out the way to be really happy.*

There is a sure path which leads to happiness, if men will only take it. There never lived the person who travelled in that path, and missed the object that he sought to attain.

It is a path open to all. It needs neither wealth, nor rank, nor learning, in order to walk in it. It is for the servant as well as for the master. It is for the poor as well as for the rich. None are excluded but those who exclude themselves.

It is the one only path. All that have ever been happy since the days of Adam have journeyed on it. There is no royal road to happiness. Kings must be content to go side by side with their humblest subjects, if they would be happy.

Reader, where is this path? Where is this road? Listen and you shall hear.

The way to be happy is *to be a real, thorough-going, true-hearted Christian*. Scripture declares it. Experience proves it. The converted man, the believer in Christ, the child of God, he and he alone is the happy man.

It sounds too simple to be true. It seems at first sight so plain a receipt that it is not believed. But the greatest truths are often the simplest. The secret which many of the wisest on earth have utterly failed to discover, is revealed to the humblest believer in Christ. I repeat it deliberately, and defy the world to disprove it. The true Christian is the only happy man.

What do I mean when I speak of a true Christian? Do I mean everybody who goes to church or chapel? Do I mean everybody who professes an orthodox creed, and bows his head at the belief? Do I mean everybody

who professes to love the Gospel? No! indeed! I mean something very different. All are not Christians who are called Christians. The man I have in view is *the Christian in heart and life*. He who has been taught by the Spirit really to feel his sins,—he who really rests all his hopes on the Lord Jesus Christ, and His atonement,—he who has been born again, and really lives a spiritual, holy life,—he whose religion is not a mere Sunday coat, but a mighty constraining principle, governing every day of his life,—he is the man I mean, when I speak of a true Christian.

What do I mean when I say the true Christian is happy? Has he no doubts and no fears? Has he no anxieties and no troubles? Has he no sorrows and no cares? Does he never feel pain and shed no tears? Far be it from me to say anything of the kind. He has a body weak and frail like other men. He has affections and passions like every one born of woman. He lives in a changeful world. But deep down in his heart he has a mine of solid peace and substantial joy which is never exhausted. This is true happiness.

Do I say that all true Christians are equally happy? No! not for a moment. There are babes in Christ's family as well as old men. There are weak members of the mystical body as well as strong ones. There are tender lambs as well as sheep. There are not only the cedars of Lebanon but the hyssop that grows on the wall. There are degrees of grace and degrees of faith. Those who have most faith and grace will have most happiness. But all, more or less, compared to the children of the world, are happy men.

Do I say that real true Christians are equally happy at all times? No! not for a moment. All have their ebbs and flows of comfort; some like the Mediterranean sea, almost insensibly,—some like the tide at Chepstow, fifty or sixty feet at a time. Their bodily health is not always the same. Their earthly circumstances are not always the same. The souls of those they love fill them, at seasons, with special anxiety. They themselves are sometimes overtaken by a fault, and walk in darkness. They sometimes give way to inconsistencies and besetting sins, and lose their sense of pardon. But as a general rule, the true Christian has a deep pool of peace within him, which even at the lowest is never entirely dry.*

The true Christian is the only happy man, because *his conscience is at peace*. That mysterious witness for God, which is so mercifully placed within us, is fully satisfied and at rest. It sees in the blood of Christ a complete cleansing away of all its guilt. It sees in the priesthood and mediation of Christ a complete answer to all its fears. It sees that, through the sacrifice and death of Christ, God can now be just, and yet be the justifier of the ungodly. It no longer bites and stings and makes its possessor afraid of himself. The Lord Jesus Christ has amply met all its requirements.

* I use the words, "as a general rule," advisedly. When a believer falls into such a horrible sin as that of David, it would be monstrous to talk of his feeling inward peace. If a man professing to be a true Christian talked to me of being happy in such a case,—before giving any evidence of the deepest, most heart-abasing repentance,—I should feel great doubts whether he ever had any grace at all.

Conscience is no longer the enemy of the true Christian, but his friend and adviser. Therefore he is happy.

The true Christian is the only happy man, because he can *sit down quietly and think about his soul*. He can look behind him and before him, he can look within him and around him, and feel, "all is well."—He can think calmly on his past life, and however many and great his sins, take comfort in the thought that they are all forgiven. The righteousness of Christ covers all, as Noah's flood over-topped the highest hills.—He can think calmly about things to come, and yet not be afraid. Sickness is painful. Death is solemn. The judgment day is an awful thing. But having Christ for him, he has nothing to fear.—He can think calmly about the Holy God whose eyes are on all his ways, and feel "He is my Father, my reconciled Father in Christ Jesus. I am weak. I am unprofitable. Yet in Christ He regards me as His dear child, and is well pleased." Oh! what a blessed privilege it is to be able to *think*, and not be afraid! I can well understand the mournful complaint of the prisoner in solitary confinement. He had warmth, and food, and clothing, and work, but he was not happy. And why? He said, "he was obliged to think."

The true Christian is the only happy man, because *he has sources of happiness entirely independent of this world*. He has something which cannot be affected by sickness and by deaths, by private losses and by public calamities, the peace of God which passeth all understanding. He has a hope laid up for him in heaven. He has a treasure which moth and rust cannot corrupt.

He has a house which can never be taken down. His loving wife may die, and his heart feel rent in twain. His darling children may be taken from him, and he may be left alone in this cold world. His earthly plans may be crossed. His health may fail. But all this time he has a portion which nothing can hurt. He has one friend who never dies. He has possessions beyond the grave, of which nothing can deprive him. His nether springs may fail, but his upper springs are never dry. This is real happiness.

The true Christian is happy, because he is *in his right position*. All the powers of his being are directed to right ends. His affections are not set on things below, but on things above. His will is not bent on self-indulgence, but is submissive to the will of God. His mind is not absorbed in wretched perishable trifles. It desires useful employment. It enjoys the luxury of doing good.—Who does not know the misery of disorder? Who has not tasted the discomfort of a house, where everything and everybody are in their wrong places, the last things first and the first things last? The heart of an unconverted man is just such a house. Grace puts everything in that heart in its right position. The things of the soul come first, and the things of the world come second. Anarchy and confusion cease. Unruly passions no longer do each one what is right in his eyes. Christ reigns over the whole man and each part of him does his proper work. The new heart is the only really light heart, for it is the only heart that is in order.—The true Christian has found out his place. He has laid aside his pride and self-will. He sits at

the feet of Jesus, and is in his right mind. He loves God and loves man, and so he is happy. In heaven all are happy, because all do God's will perfectly. The nearer a man gets to this standard the happier he will be.

Ah! reader, the plain truth is, that without Christ there is no happiness in this world. He alone can give the Comforter who abideth for ever. He is the sun; without Him men never feel warm. He is the light; without Him men are always in the dark. He is the bread; without Him men are always starving. He is the living water; without Him men are always athirst. Give them what you like,—place them where you please,—surround them with all the comforts you can imagine,—it makes no difference. Separate from Christ, the Prince of Peace, a man cannot be happy.

Give a man a sensible interest in Christ, and he will be happy *in spite of poverty*. He will tell you that he wants nothing that is really good. He is provided for. He has riches in possession, and riches in reversion. He has meat to eat that the world knows not of. He has friends who never leave him nor forsake him. The Father and the Son come to him, and make their abode with him. The Lord Christ sups with him, and he with Christ. (Rev. iii. 20.)

Give a man a sensible interest in Christ, and he will be happy *in spite of sickness*. His flesh may groan and his body be worn out with pain, but his heart will rest and be at peace. One of the happiest people I ever saw was a young woman, who had been hopelessly ill for many years with disease of the spine. She lay in a garret without a fire. The straw thatch was not two

feet above her face. She had not the slightest hope of recovery. But she was always rejoicing in the Lord Jesus. The spirit triumphed mightily over the flesh. She was happy, because Christ was with her.*

Give a man a sensible interest in Christ, and he will be happy *in spite of abounding public calamities*. The government of his country may be thrown into confusion. Rebellion and disorder may turn everything upside down. Laws may be trampled under foot. Justice and equity may be outraged. Liberty may be cast down to the ground. Might may prevail over right. But still his heart will not fail. He will remember that the kingdom of Christ will one day be set up. He will say like the old Scotch minister who lived unmoved throughout the turmoil of the first French revolution: "It is all right: it shall be well with the righteous."

Reader, I know well that Satan hates the doctrine which I am endeavouring to press upon you. I have no doubt he is filling your mind with objections and reasonings, and persuading you that I am wrong. I am not afraid to meet these objections face to face. Let us bring them forward and see what they are.

You may tell me that "*you know many very religious people who are not happy at all.*" You see them diligent

* John Howard, the famous Christian philanthropist, in his last journey said, "I hope I have sources of enjoyment that depend not on the particular spot I inhabit. A rightly cultivated mind under the power of religion and the exercises of beneficent dispositions, affords a ground of satisfaction little affected by *heres and theres.*"

in attending public worship. You know that they are never missing at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. But you see in them no marks of the peace which I have been describing.

But are you sure that these people you speak of are true believers in Christ? Are you sure that with all their appearance of religion they are born again and converted to God? Is it not very likely that they have nothing but the name of Christianity without the reality, and a form of godliness without the power? Alas! reader, you have yet to learn that people may do many religious acts and yet possess no saving religion. It is not a mere formal, ceremonial Christianity that will ever make people happy. We want something more than going to church, and going to sacrament to give us peace. There must be real vital union with Christ. It is not the formal Christian, but the true Christian, that is the happy man.

You may tell me, that "*you know really spiritually-minded and converted people who do not seem happy.*" You have heard them frequently complaining of their own hearts, and groaning over their own corruption. They seem to you all doubts and anxieties and fears. And you want to know, where is the happiness in these people of which I have been saying so much?

I do not deny that there are many saints of God such as these whom you describe, and I am sorry for it. I allow that there are many believers who live far below their privileges, and seem to know nothing of joy and peace in believing. But did you ever ask any of these people, whether they would give up the position in

religion they have reached, and go back to the world? Did you ever ask them, after all their groanings, and doubtings, and fearings, whether they think they would be happier, if they ceased to follow hard after Christ? *Did you ever ask these questions?* I am certain if you did, that the weakest and lowest believers would all give you one answer. I am certain they would tell you that they would rather cling to their little scrap of hope in Christ, than possess the world. I am sure they would all answer, "Our faith is weak, if we have any;—our grace is small, if we have any;—our joy in Christ is next to nothing at all;—but we cannot give up what we have got. Though the Lord slay us, we must cling to Him." Ah! reader, the root of happiness lies deep in many a poor weak believer's heart, when neither leaves nor blossoms are to be seen.

But you will tell me, in the last place, that "*you cannot think most believers are happy, because they are so grave and serious.*" You think that they do not really possess this happiness I have been describing, because their countenances do not show it. You doubt the reality of their joy, because it is so little seen.

I might easily repeat what I told you at the beginning of this tract, that a merry face is no sure proof of a happy heart. But I will not do so. I will rather ask you, whether you yourself may not be the cause why believers look grave and serious when you meet them. If you are not converted yourself, you surely cannot expect them to look at you without sorrow. They see you on the high road to destruction, and that alone is enough to give them pain. They see thousands

like you, hurrying on to weeping and wailing and endless woe. Now, is it possible that such a daily sight should not give them grief? Your company very likely is one cause why they are grave. Wait till you are a converted man yourself, before you pass judgment on the gravity of converted people. See them in companies where all are of one heart and all love Christ, and so far as my own experience goes, you will find no people so truly happy as true Christians.*

Reader, I repeat my assertion in this part of my tract. I repeat it boldly, confidently, deliberately. I say that there is no happiness among men that will at all compare with that of the true Christian. All other happiness by the side of his is moonlight compared to sunshine, and brass by the side of gold. Boast, if you will, of the laughter and merriment of irreligious men. Sneer, if you will, at the gravity and seriousness, which appear in the demeanour of many Christians. I have looked the whole subject in the face, and am not moved. I say, that the true Christian alone is the truly happy man, and the way to be happy is to be a true Christian.

And now, reader, I am going to close this tract by a few words of plain application. I have endeavoured to show you what is essential to true happiness. I have endeavoured to expose the fallacy of many views which prevail upon the subject. I have endeavoured to point out to you in plain and unmistakeable words, where

* When the infidel Hume asked Bishop Horne why religious people always looked melancholy, the learned prelate replied, "The sight of you, Mr. Hume, would make any Christian melancholy."—*Sinclair's Aphorisms*. page 13.

true happiness alone can be found. Suffer me to wind up all by an affectionate appeal to your conscience.

1. In the first place, *let me entreat every reader of this tract to apply to his own heart the solemn enquiry, Are you happy?*

High or low, rich or poor, master or servant, farmer or labourer, young or old, here is a question that deserves an answer. *Are you really happy?*

Man of the world, who art caring for nothing but the things of time, neglecting the Bible, making a god of business or money, providing for everything but the day of judgment, scheming and planning about everything but eternity,—Are you happy? *You know you are not.*

Foolish woman, who art trifling life away in levity and frivolity, spending hours after hours on that poor frail body, which must soon feed the worms, making an idol of dress and fashion, and excitement, and human praise, as if this world was all,—Are you happy? *You know you are not.*

Young man, who art bent on pleasure and self-indulgence, fluttering from one idle pastime to another, like the moth about the candle,—fancying yourself clever and knowing, and too wise to be led by parsons, and ignorant that the devil is leading you captive, like the ox that is led to the slaughter,—Are you happy? *You know you are not.*

Yes! each and all of you, you are not happy, and in your own consciences you know it well. You may not allow it, but it is sadly true. There is a great empty place in each of your hearts and nothing will fill it.

Pour into it money, learning, rank, and pleasure, and it will be empty still.—There is a sore place in each of your consciences and nothing will heal it. Infidelity cannot. Free-thinking cannot. Romanism cannot. They are all quack medicines. Nothing can heal it, but that which at present you have not used, the simple Gospel of Christ. Yes! you are indeed a miserable people.

Take warning this day that you never will be happy till you are converted. You might as well expect to feel the sun shine on your face when you turn {your back to it, as to feel happy when you turn your back on God and on Christ.

2. In the next place, *let me warn all who are not true Christians of the folly of living a life which cannot make them happy.*

I pity you from the bottom of my heart and would fain persuade you to open your eyes and be wise. I stand as a watchman on the tower of the everlasting Gospel. I see you sowing misery for yourselves, and I call upon you to stop and think, before it is too late. Oh! that God may show you your folly!

You are hewing out for yourselves cisterns, broken cisterns which can hold no water. You are spending your time, and strength, and affections on that which will give you no return for your labour,—“spending your money on that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not.” You are building up Babels of your own contriving, and ignorant that God will pour contempt on your schemes for pro-

curing happiness, because you attempt to be happy without Him.

Awake from your dreams, I entreat you, and show yourselves men. Think of the uselessness of living a life, which you will be ashamed of when you die, and of having a mere nominal religion, which will just fail you when it is most wanted.

Open your eyes and look round the world. Tell me who was ever really happy without God and Christ and the Holy Spirit. Look at the road in which you are travelling. Mark the footsteps of those who have gone before you. See how many have turned away from it, and confessed they were wrong.

Reader, I warn you plainly, that if you are not a true Christian you will miss happiness in the world that now is, as well as in the world to come. Oh! believe me, the way of happiness, and the way of salvation are one and the same. He that will have his own way, and refuses to serve Christ, will never be really happy. But he that serves Christ has the promise of both lives. He is happy on earth, and will be happier still in heaven.

Reader, if you are neither happy in this world nor the next, it will be all your own fault. Oh! think of this. Do not be guilty of such enormous folly. Who does not mourn over the folly of the drunkard, the opium eater, and the suicide? But there is no folly like that of the impenitent child of the world.

3. In the next place, *let me entreat all readers of this tract, who are not yet happy, to seek happiness, where alone it can be found.*

The keys of the way to happiness are in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is sealed and appointed by God the Father, to give the bread of life to them that hunger, and to give the water of life to them that thirst. The door which riches and rank and learning have so often tried to open, and tried in vain, is now ready to open to every humble, praying believer. Oh! reader, if you want to be happy, come to Christ.

Come to Him, confessing that you are weary of your own ways, and want rest,—that you find you have no power and might to make yourself holy or happy or fit for heaven, and have no hope but in Him. Tell Him this unreservedly. This is coming to Christ.

Come to Him, imploring Him to show you His mercy and grant you His salvation,—to wash you in His own blood and take your sins away,—to speak peace to your conscience, and heal your troubled soul. Tell him all this unreservedly. This is coming to Christ.

You have everything to encourage you. The Lord Jesus himself invites you. He proclaims to you, as well as to others, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. xi. 28—30.) Oh! reader, wait for nothing. You may feel unworthy. You may feel as if you did not repent enough. But wait no longer. Come to Christ.

You have everything to encourage you. Thousands have walked in the way you are invited to enter, and

have found it good. Once, like yourself, they served the world, and plunged deeply into folly and sin. Once, like yourself, they became weary of their wickedness, and longed for deliverance and rest. They heard of Christ, and His willingness to help and save. They came to Him by faith and prayer, after many a doubt and hesitation. They found him a thousand times more gracious than they had expected. They rested on Him and were happy. They carried His cross and tasted peace. Oh! reader, walk in their steps.

Reader, I beseech you, by the mercies of God to come to Christ. As ever you would be happy, I entreat you to come to Christ. Cast off delays. Awake from your past slumber. Arise, and be free. This day come to Christ.

4. In the last place, *let me offer a few hints to all true Christians for the increase and promotion of their happiness.*

I offer these hints with diffidence. I desire to apply them to my own conscience as well as to your's. You have found Christ's service happy. I have no doubt that you feel such sweetness in Christ's peace, that you would fain know more of it. I am sure that these hints deserve attention.

Believers, if you would have an increase of happiness in Christ's service, *labour every year to grow in grace.* Beware of standing still. The holiest men are always the happiest. Let your aim be every year to be more holy, to know more, to feel more, to see more of the fulness of Christ. Rest not upon old grace. Do not be

content with the degree of religion whereunto you have attained. Search the Scriptures more earnestly. Pray more fervently. Hate sin more. Mortify self-will more. Become more humble the nearer you draw to your end. Seek more direct personal communion with the Lord Jesus. Strive to be more like Enoch, daily walking with God. Keep your conscience clear of little sins. Grieve not the Spirit. Avoid wranglings and disputes about the lesser matters of religion. Lay more firm hold upon those great truths, without which no man can be saved. Remember and practise these things, and you will be more happy.

Believers, if you would have an increase of happiness in Christ's service, *labour every year to be more thankful*. Pray that you may know more and more what it is to "rejoice in the Lord." Learn to have a deeper sense of your own wretched sinfulness and corruption, and to be more deeply grateful, that by the grace of God you are what you are. Alas! there is too much complaining and too little thanksgiving among the people of God. There is too much murmuring and poring over the things that we have not. There is too little praising and blessing for the many undeserved mercies that we have. Oh! that God would pour out upon us a greater spirit of thankfulness and praise!

Believers, if you would have an increase of happiness in Christ's service, *labour every year to do more good*. Look round the circle in which your lot is cast, and lay yourself out to be useful. Strive to be of the same character with God. He is not only good but "doeth good." Alas! there is far too much selfishness among

believers in the present day. There is far too much lazy sitting by the fire, nursing our own spiritual diseases, and croaking over the state of our own hearts. Up! and be useful in your day and generation! Is there no one in all the world that you can read to? Is there no one that you can speak to? Is there no one that you can write to? Is there literally nothing that you can do for the glory of God, and the benefit of your fellow men? Oh! I cannot think it, I cannot think it. There is much that you might do, if you had only the will. For your own happiness sake, arise and do it without delay. The bold, outspoken, working Christians are always the happiest. The more you do for God the more God will do for you.

Reader, I ask you to ponder the things I have been saying. May you never rest till you can give a satisfactory answer to my question, ARE YOU HAPPY?

Reader, if you are able to answer my question satisfactorily, I ask you never to forget that great decision in Christ's service is the secret of great happiness. The compromising, lingering Christian must never expect to taste perfect peace. **THE MOST DECIDED CHRISTIAN WILL ALWAYS BE THE HAPPIEST MAN.**

Strive !

LUKE XIII. 23.

" Strive to enter in at the strait gate : for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

Reader,

There was once a man who asked our Lord Jesus Christ a very deep question. He said to Him, " Lord, are there few that be saved ? "

Who this man was we do not know. What his motive was for asking this question we are not told. Perhaps he wished to gratify an idle curiosity. Perhaps he wanted an excuse for not seeking salvation himself. The Holy Ghost has kept back all this from us. The name and motive of the inquirer are both hidden.

But one thing is very clear, and that is the vast importance of the saying of our Lord to which the question gave rise. Jesus seized the opportunity to direct the minds of all around Him to their own plain duty. He knew the train of thought which the man's inquiry had set moving in their hearts. He saw what was going on within them. " Strive," He cries, " to enter in at the strait gate." Whether there be few saved or many, your course is clear,— " Strive to enter in. Now is the accepted time. Now is the day of

salvation. A day shall come when many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Strive to enter in now."

Reader, I desire to call your serious attention to the solemn lessons which this saying of the Lord Jesus is meant to teach. It is one which deserves special remembrance in the present day. It teaches unmistakeably that mighty truth, our own personal responsibility for the salvation of our souls. It shows the immense danger of putting off the great business of religion, as so many unhappily do. On both these points the witness of our Lord Jesus Christ in the text is clear. He, who is the eternal God, and who spoke the words of perfect wisdom, says to the sons of men, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

I. Here is a *description* of the way of salvation. Jesus calls it "the strait gate."

II. Here is a plain *command*. Jesus says, "Strive to enter in."

III. Here is an awful *prophecy*. Jesus says, "Many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

May the Holy Ghost apply the subject to the hearts of all who read this tract! May all who read it know the way of salvation experimentally, obey the command of the Lord practically, and be found safe in the great day of His second coming!

I. Here is a description of the way of salvation. Jesus calls it "*the strait gate.*"

There is a gate which leads to pardon, peace with God, and heaven. Whosoever goes in by that gate shall be saved. Never, surely, was a gate more needed. Sin is a vast mountain between man and God. How shall man climb over it?—Sin is a high wall between man and God. How shall man get through it?—Sin is a deep gulf between man and God. How shall man cross over it?—God is in heaven, holy, pure, spiritual, undefiled, light without any darkness at all, a Being who cannot bear that which is evil or look upon iniquity. Man is a poor fallen worm, crawling on earth for a few years, —sinful, corrupt, erring, defective, —a being whose imagination is only evil, and whose heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. How shall man and God be brought together?—How shall man ever draw near to his Maker without fear and shame? Blessed be God! there is a way. There is a road. There is a path. There is a door. It is the gate spoken of in the words of Christ, "*the strait gate.*"

This gate was *made for sinners by the Lord Jesus Christ*. From all eternity He covenanted and engaged that He would make it. In the fulness of time He came into the world, and made it by His own atoning death on the cross. By that death He made satisfaction for man's sin, paid man's debt to God, and bore man's punishment. He built a great gate at the cost of His own body and blood. He reared a ladder on earth, whose top reached to heaven. He made a door,

by which the chief of sinners may enter into the holy presence of God, and not be afraid. He opened a road, by which the vilest of men, believing in Him, may draw near to God and have peace. He cries to us, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." (John x. 9.) "I am the way, no man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John xiv. 6.) "By Him," says Paul, "we have boldness and access with confidence." (Ephes. iii. 12.) Thus was the gate of salvation formed.

This gate is called *the strait gate*, and it is not called so without cause. It is always strait, narrow, and difficult to pass through to some persons, and it will be so as long as the world stands. It is narrow to all who love sin, and are determined not to part with it. It is narrow to all who set their affections on this world, and seek first its pleasures and rewards. It is narrow to all who dislike trouble, and are unwilling to take pains and make sacrifices for their souls. It is narrow to all who like company, and want to keep in with the crowd. It is narrow to all who are self-righteous and think they are good people, and deserve to be saved. To all such the great gate, which Christ made, is narrow and strait. In vain they seek to pass through. The gate will not admit them. God is not unwilling to receive them. Their sins are not too many to be forgiven. But they are not willing to be saved in God's way. Thousands have tried to make the gate-way wider. Thousands have worked and toiled to get to heaven on lower terms. But the gate never alters. It is not elastic. It will not stretch to accom-

moderate one man more than another. It is still the strait gate.

Reader, strait as this gate is, it is *the only one by which men can get to heaven*. There is no side door. There is no bye-path. There is no gap or low place in the wall. All that are ever saved will be saved only by Christ, and only by simple faith in Him.—Not one will be saved by repentance. To-day's sorrow does not wipe off yesterday's score.—Not one will be saved by his own works. The best works that any man can do are little better than splendid sins.—Not one will be saved by his formal regularity in the use of the outward means of grace. When we have done all, we are poor, unprofitable servants. Oh! No! it is mere waste of time to seek any other road to eternal life. Men may look right and left, and weary themselves with their own devices, but they will never find another door. Proud men may dislike the gate, if they will. Profligate men may scoff at it, and make a jest of those who use it. Lazy men may complain that the way is hard. But men will discover no other salvation, than that of faith in the blood and righteousness of a crucified Redeemer. There stands between you and heaven the great gate. It may be strait. But it is the only one. We must either enter heaven by the strait gate, or not at all.

Strait as this gate is, it is *a gate ever ready to open*. No sinners of any kind are forbidden to draw near. "Whosoever will" may enter in and be saved. There is but one condition of admission. That condition is that you really feel your sins and desire to be saved by Christ in His own way. Art thou really sensible of thy

guilt and vileness? Hast thou a truly broken and contrite heart? Behold the gate of salvation and come in. He that made it declares, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." The question to be considered is not whether you are a great sinner or a little sinner,—whether you are elect or not,—whether you are converted or not. The question is simply this, "Do you feel your sins? Do you feel labouring and heavy-laden? Are you willing to put your soul into Christ's hand?" Then if that be the case, the gate will open to you at once. Come in this very day. Wherefore standest thou without?

Strait as this gate is, it is *one through which thousands have gone in and been saved*. No sinner was ever turned back, and told he was too bad to be admitted, if he came really sick of his sins. Thousands of all sorts have been received, cleansed, washed, pardoned, clothed, and made heirs of eternal life. Some of them seemed very unlikely to be admitted. You and I might have thought they were too bad to be saved. But He that built the gate did not refuse them. As soon as they knocked, He gave orders that they should be let in.

Manasseh, king of Judah, went up to this gate. None could have been worse than he. He had despised his good father Hezekiah's example and advice. He had bowed down to idols. He had filled Jerusalem with bloodshed and cruelty. He had slain his own children. But as soon as his eyes were opened to his sins, and he fled to the gate for pardon, the gate flew wide open, and he was saved.

Saul the Pharisee went up to this gate. He had been

a great offender. He had been a blasphemer of Christ, and a persecutor of Christ's people. He had laboured hard to stop the progress of the Gospel. But as soon as his heart was touched and he found out his own guilt, and fled to the gate for pardon, at once the gate flew wide open and he was saved.

Many of the Jews who crucified our Lord went up to this gate. They had been grievous sinners indeed. They had refused and rejected their own Messiah. They had delivered Him to Pilate and entreated that He might be slain. They had desired Barabbas to be let go, and the Son of God to be crucified. But in the day when they were pricked to the heart by Peter's preaching, they fled to the gate for pardon, and at once the gate flew open and they were saved.

The jailer at Philippi went up to this gate. He had been a cruel, hard, godless man. He had done all in his power to ill-treat Paul and his companion. He had thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. But when his conscience was aroused by the earthquake, and his mind enlightened by Paul's teaching, he fled to the gate for pardon, and at once the gate flew open and he was saved.

But why need I stop short in Bible examples? Why should I not say that multitudes have gone to the strait gate since the days of the apostles, and have entered in by it and been saved? Thousands of all ranks, classes, and ages,—learned and unlearned, rich and poor, old and young, have tried the gate and found it ready to open,—have gone through it and found peace to their souls. Yes! thousands of persons yet living have made

proof of the gate, and found it the way to real happiness. Noblemen and commoners, merchants and bankers, soldiers and sailors, farmers and tradesmen, labourers and workmen, are still upon earth, who have found the strait gate to be a way of pleasantness and a path of peace. They have not brought up an evil report of the country inside. They have found Christ's yoke to be easy, and His burden to be light. Their only regret has been that so few enter in, and that they themselves did not enter in before.

Reader, this is the gate which I want every one to enter into whose hand this tract may fall. I want you not merely to go to church or chapel, but to go with heart and soul to the gate of life. I want you not merely to believe there is such a gate, and to think it a good thing, but to enter by faith and be saved.

Think *what a privilege* it is to have a gate at all. The angels who kept not their first estate fell, never to rise again. To them there was no door of escape opened.—The heathen never heard of any way to eternal life. What would not many a black man and many a red man give, if he only heard one plain sermon about Christ?—The Jews in Old Testament times only saw the gate dimly and far away. The way into the holiest was not made manifest while the first tabernacle was standing. *You have the gate set plainly before you.* You have Christ and full salvation offered to you without money and without price. You never need be at a loss which way to turn. Oh! consider what a mercy this is! Beware that you do not despise the gate, and perish in unbelief. Better a thousand times not to

know of the gate, than to know of it and yet tarry outside. How indeed will you escape, if you neglect so great salvation?

Think *what a thankful man* you ought to be, if you have really gone in at the strait gate. To be a pardoned, forgiven, justified soul,—to be ready for sickness, death, judgment and eternity,—to be ever provided for in both worlds,—surely this is matter for daily praise. True Christians ought to be more full of thanksgivings than they are. I fear that few sufficiently remember what they were by nature, and what debtors they are to grace. A heathen remarked that singing hymns of praise was one special mark of the early Christians. Well would it be for Christians in the present day, if they knew more of this frame of mind. It is no mark of a healthy state of soul when there is much complaining and little praise. It is an amazing mercy that there is any gate of salvation at all. But it is a still greater mercy when we are taught to enter in by it and be saved.

II. In the second place, here is a plain command.—Jesus says to us, “*Strive to enter in at the strait gate.*”

There is often much to be learned in a single word of Scripture. The words of our Lord Jesus in particular are always full of matter for thought. Here is a word which is a striking example of what I mean. Let us see what the great Teacher would have us gather out of the word “*Strive.*”

“STRIVE” teaches that a man must use means diligently, if he would have his soul saved. There are

means which God has appointed, to help man in his endeavours to approach Him. There are ways in which a man must walk, if he desires to be found of Christ. Public worship, reading the Bible, hearing the Gospel preached,—these are the kind of things to which I refer. They lie as it were in the middle, between man and God. Doubtless no one can change his own heart, or wipe away one of his sins, or make himself in the least degree acceptable to God. But I do say, that if man could do nothing but sit still, Christ would never have said “strive.”

“STRIVE” teaches that man is a free agent, and will be dealt with by God as a responsible being. The Lord Jesus does not bid us to wait, and wish, and feel, and hope, and desire. He says, “Strive.” I call that miserable religion which teaches people to be content with saying, “we can do nothing of ourselves,” and makes them continue in sin. It is as bad as teaching people that it is not their fault if they are not converted, and that God only is to blame if they are not saved. I find no such theology in the New Testament. I hear Jesus saying to sinners, “Come—repent—believe—labour—ask—seek—knock.” I see plainly that our salvation from first to last, is entirely *of God*. But I see with no less plainness that our ruin, if lost, is wholly and entirely *of ourselves*. I maintain that sinners are always addressed as accountable and responsible. And I want no better proof of this than is contained in the word “Strive.”

“STRIVE” teaches that a man must expect many adversaries and a hard battle, if he would have his soul

saved. And this as matter of experience is strictly true. There are no gains without pains in spiritual things any more than in temporal. That roaring lion the devil will never let a soul escape from him without a struggle. The heart which is naturally sensual and earthly will never be turned to spiritual things without a daily fight. The world with all its opposition and temptations will never be overcome without a conflict. But why should all this surprise us? What great and good thing was ever done without trouble? Wheat does not grow without ploughing and sowing. Riches are not obtained without care and attention. Success in life is not won without hardships and toil. And heaven, above all, is not to be reached without the cross and the battle. The violent take the kingdom by force. (Matt. xi. 12.) A man must strive.

"STRIVE" teaches that it is worth while for a man to seek salvation. That may well be said. If there be anything that deserves a struggle in this world, it is the prosperity of the soul. The objects for which the great majority of men strive are comparatively poor and trifling things. Riches, and greatness, and rank, and learning, are a corruptible crown. The incorruptible things are all within the strait gate. The peace of God which passeth all understanding,—the bright hope of good things to come,—the sense of the Spirit dwelling in us,—the consciousness that we are pardoned, safe, ready, insured, provided for in time and eternity, whatever may happen,—these are true gold and durable riches. Well may the Lord Jesus call on us to strive.

"STRIVE" teaches that laziness in religion is a great sin. It is not merely a misfortune, as some fancy,—a thing for which people are to be pitied, and a matter for regret. It is something far more than this. It is a breach of a plain commandment. What shall be said of the man who transgresses God's law, and does something which God says, Thou shalt not do? There can be but one answer. He is a sinner. "Sin is the transgression of the law." And what shall be said of the man who neglects his soul, and makes no effort to enter the strait gate? There can be only one reply. He is omitting a positive duty. Christ says to him, "Strive," and behold! he sits still.

STRIVE" teaches that all outside the strait gate are in great danger. They are in danger of being lost for ever. There is but a step between them and death. If death finds them in their present condition, they will perish without hope. The Lord Jesus saw that clearly. He knew the uncertainty of life and the shortness of time. He would fain have sinners make haste and delay not, lest they put off soul business too long. He speaks as one who saw the devil drawing near to them daily, and the days of their life gradually ebbing away. He would have them take heed they be not too late. Therefore He cries "Strive."

Ah! reader, that word "Strive," raises solemn thoughts in my mind. It is brimful of condemnation for thousands of baptized persons. It condemns the ways and practices of multitudes who profess and call themselves Christians. Many there are who neither swear, nor murder, nor commit adultery, nor steal, nor lie. But

one thing unhappily cannot be said of them. They cannot be said to "strive" to be saved. The spirit of slumber possesses their hearts in everything that concerns religion. About the things of the world they are active enough. They rise early, and late take rest. They labour. They toil. They are busy. They are careful. But about the one thing needful they never "strive" at all.

What shall I say of those who are irregular about public worship on Sundays? There are thousands all over Great Britain who answer this description. Sometimes, if they feel disposed, they go to some church or chapel, and attend a religious service. At other times they stay at home and read the paper, or idle about, or square their accounts, or seek some amusement. *Is this "striving?"* I speak to men of common sense. Let them judge what I say.

What shall I say of those who come regularly to a place of worship, but come entirely as a matter of form? There are many in every parish of Great Britain in this condition. Their fathers taught them to come. Their custom has always been to come. It would not be respectable to stay away. But they care nothing for the worship of God when they do come. Whether they hear law or Gospel, truth or error, it is all the same to them. They remember nothing afterwards. They put off their form of religion with their Sunday clothes, and return to the world. And is this striving? I speak to men of common sense. Let them judge what I say.

What shall I say of those who seldom or never read the Bible? There are thousands of persons, I fear, who

answer this description. They know the Book by name. They know it is commonly regarded as the only Book which teaches us how to live and how to die. But they can never find time for reading it. Newspapers, reviews, novels, romances, they can read, but not the Bible. And *is this "striving"* to enter in? I speak to men of common sense. Let them judge what I say.

What shall I say of those who never pray? There are multitudes, I firmly believe, in this condition. Without God they rise in the morning, and without God they lie down at night. They ask nothing. They confess nothing. They return thanks for nothing. They seek nothing. They are all dying creatures, and yet they are not even on speaking terms with their Maker and their Judge. And *is this "striving?"* I speak to men of common sense. Let them judge what I say.

Ah! reader, believe me, it is a solemn thing to be a minister of the Gospel. It is a painful thing to look on and notice the ways of mankind in spiritual matters. We hold in our hands that great statute Book of God, which declares that without repentance, and conversion, and faith in Christ, and holiness, no man living can be saved. In discharge of our office we urge on men to repent, believe, and be saved. But alas! how frequently we have to lament that our labour seems all in vain. Men attend our churches and listen, and approve, but do not "strive" to be saved. We show the sinfulness of sin. We unfold the loveliness of Christ. We expose the vanity of the world. We set forth the happiness of Christ's service. We offer the living water to the wearied and heavy-laden sons of toil. But alas! how

often we seem to speak to the winds. Our words are heard. Our arguments are not refuted. But we see plainly in the week that men are not "striving" to be saved. There comes the devil on Monday morning, and offers his countless snares. There comes the world, and holds out its seeming prizes. Our hearers follow them greedily. They work hard for this world's goods. They toil at Satan's bidding. But for the one thing needful they will not "strive" at all.

I am not writing from hear-say. I speak what I have seen. I write down the result of thirteen years' experience in the ministry. I have learned lessons about human nature during that period which I never knew before. I have seen how true are our Lord's words about the narrow way. I have discovered how few there are that strive to be saved.

Earnestness about temporal matters is common enough. Striving to be rich and prosperous in this world is not rare at all. Pains about wheat, barley, and beans,—pains about rent, and wages, and labour, and land,—pains about gardens, and allotments, and eating and drinking,—pains about such matters I see in abundance. But I see few who take pains about their souls. I see few any where who "strive" to enter in at the strait gate.

I am not surprised at all this. I read in the Bible that it is only what I am to expect. The parable of the great supper is an exact picture of things that I have seen with my own eyes ever since I became a minister. I find, as my Lord and Saviour tells me, that "men make excuse." One has his piece of land to see. Another has his oxen to prove. A third has his family

hindrances. But all this does not prevent my feeling deeply grieved for the souls of men. I grieve to think that they should have eternal life so close to them, and yet be lost because they will not "strive" to enter in and be saved.

Reader, I know not what your state of soul may be. But I warn you to take heed that you do not perish for ever for want of striving. Do not suppose that it needs some great scarlet sin to bring you to the pit of destruction. You have only to sit still and do nothing, and you will find yourself there at last. Yes! Satan does not ask you to walk in the steps of Cain, and Pharaoh, and Ahab, and Belshazzar, and Judas Iscariot. There is another road to hell quite as sure, the road of spiritual indolence, spiritual laziness, and spiritual sloth. Satan has no objection to your being a respectable member of the Christian church. He will let you pay your tithes, and rates, and pew-rents. He will allow you to sit comfortably in church every Sunday you live. He knows full well, that so long as you do not "strive," you must come at last to the worm that never dies, and the fire that is not quenched. Take heed that you do not come to this end. I repeat it, *you have only to do nothing, and you will be lost.*

Reader, if you have been taught to strive for your soul's prosperity, I entreat you never to suppose you can go too far. Never give way to the idea that you are taking too much trouble about your spiritual condition, and that there is no need for so much carefulness. Settle it rather in your mind that "in all labour there is profit," and that no labour is so profitable as

that bestowed on the soul. It is a maxim among good farmers, that the more they do for the land, the more the land does for them. I am sure it should be a maxim among Christians, that the more they do for their religion, the more their religion will do for them. Watch against the slightest inclination to be careless about any means of grace. Beware of shortening your prayers, your Bible reading, your private communion with God. Take heed that you do not give way to a carnal, lazy manner of using the public services of God's house. Fight against any rising disposition to be sleepy, critical, and fault-finding, while you listen to the preaching of the Gospel. Whatever you do for God, do it with all your heart, and mind, and strength. In other things be moderate, and dread running into extremes. In soul matters fear *moderation* just as you would fear the plague. Care not what men think of you. Let it be enough for you that your Master says, "STRIVE."

III. The last thing I wish to consider in this tract is the awful prophecy which the Lord Jesus delivers. He says, "*many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*"

When shall this be? At what period shall the gate of salvation be shut for ever? When shall striving to enter be of no use? These are serious questions. The gate is now ready to open to the chief of sinners. But a day comes when it shall open no more.

The time foretold by our Lord, is the time of His own second coming to judge the world. The long-suffering

of God will at last have an end. The throne of grace will at length be taken down, and the throne of judgment shall be set up in its place. The fountain of living waters shall at length be closed. The strait gate shall at last be barred and bolted. The day of grace will be past and over. The day of reckoning with a sin-laden world shall at length begin. And then shall be brought to pass the solemn prophecy of the Lord Jesus, "many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

Reader, all prophecies of Scripture that have been fulfilled hitherto, have been fulfilled to the very letter. They have seemed to many unlikely, improbable, impossible, up to the very time of their accomplishment. But not one word of them has ever failed.

The promises of *good things* have come to pass, in spite of difficulties that seemed insuperable. Sarah had a son when she was past bearing. The children of Israel were brought out of Egypt, and planted in the promised land. The Jews were redeemed from the captivity of Babylon after seventy years, and enabled once more to build the temple. The Lord Jesus was born of a pure virgin, lived, ministered, was sold, and cut off, precisely as Scripture foretold. The word of God was pledged, in all these cases, that it should be so. *And so it was.*

The predictions of *judgments* on cities and nations have come to pass, though at the time they were first spoken, they seemed incredible. Egypt is the basest of kingdoms. Edom is a wilderness. Tyre is a rock for drying nets. Nineveh, that exceeding great city, is laid

waste, and become a desolation. Babylon is a dry land and a wilderness; her broad walls are utterly broken down. The Jews are scattered over the whole earth, and yet remain a separate people. In all these cases the word of God foretold that it should be so. *And so it is.*

Reader, the prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ which I press on your attention this day, shall be fulfilled in like manner. Not one word of it shall fail when the time of its accomplishment is due. "Many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

There is a time coming, when seeking God shall be useless. Oh! that men would remember that! Too many seem to fancy that the hour will never arrive, when they shall seek and not find. But they are sadly mistaken. They will discover their mistake one day to their own confusion, except they repent. When Christ comes, "many shall seek to enter in, and *not be able.*"

There is a time coming, when many shall be shut out from heaven for ever. It shall not be the lot of a few, but of a great multitude. It shall not happen to one or two in this parish, and one or two in that. It shall be the miserable end of a vast crowd. "*Many* will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

Knowledge shall come to many too late. They shall see at last the value of an immortal soul, and the happiness of having it saved. They shall understand at last their own sinfulness and God's holiness, and the glorious fitness of the Gospel of Christ. They shall comprehend at last why ministers seemed so anxious, and preached so long, and entreated them so earnestly

to be converted. But alas! they shall know all this *too late!*

Repentance shall come to many too late. They shall discover their own exceeding wickedness, and be thoroughly ashamed of their past folly. They shall be full of bitter regret, and unavailing lamentations, of keen convictions, and of piercing sorrows. They shall weep, and wail, and mourn, when they reflect on their sins. The remembrance of their lives will be grievous to them. The burden of their guilt will seem intolerable. But alas! like Judas Iscariot, they will repent *too late!*

Faith shall come to many too late. They will no longer be able to deny that there is a God, and a devil, a heaven, and a hell. Deism, and scepticism, and infidelity shall be laid aside for ever. Scoffing, and jesting, and free-thinking shall cease. They will see with their own eyes, and feel in their own bodies, that the things of which ministers spoke were not cunningly devised fables, but great real truths. They will find out to their cost that evangelical religion was not cant, extravagance, fanaticism, and enthusiasm. They will discover that it was the one thing needful, and that for want of it they are lost for ever. Like the devil, they will at length believe and tremble, but *too late!*

A desire of salvation shall come to many too late. They shall long after pardon, and peace, and the favour of God, when they can no more be had. They will wish they might have one more Sunday over again, have one more offer of forgiveness, have one more call to prayer. But it will matter nothing what they think, or feel, or desire then. The day of grace will be over.

The gate of salvation will be bolted and barred. It will be *too late*!

Ah! reader, I often think what a change there will be one day in the price and estimation at which things are valued. I look round this world in which my lot is cast. I mark the current price of everything this world contains. I look forward to the coming of Christ, and the great day of God. I think of the new order of things, which that day will bring in. I read the words of the Lord Jesus, when He describes the master of the house rising up and shutting the door. And as I read, I say to myself, "There will be a great change soon."

What are the *dear things* now? Gold, silver, precious stones, bank-notes, mines, ships, lands, houses, horses, carriages, furniture, meat, drink, clothes, and the like. These are the things that are thought valuable. These are the things that command a ready market. These are the things which you can never get below a certain price. He that has much of these things is counted a wealthy man. Such is the world!

And what are the *cheap things* now? The knowledge of God, the free salvation of the Gospel, the favour of Christ, the grace of the Holy Ghost, the privilege of being God's son, the title to eternal life, the right to the tree of life, the reversion of a mansion in heaven, the promises of an incorruptible inheritance, the offer of a crown of glory that fadeth not away. These are the things that no man hardly cares for. They are offered to the sons of men without money and without price. They may be had for nothing,—freely and gratuitously. "Whosoever will" may take his portion. But alas!

there is no demand for these things. They go a begging. They are scarcely looked at. They are offered in vain. Such is the world!

But a day is coming upon us all, when the value of everything shall be altered. A day is coming, when bank-notes shall be as useless as rags, and gold shall be as worthless as the dust of the earth. A day is coming, when thousands shall care nothing for the things for which they once lived, and shall desire nothing so much as the things which they once despised. The halls and palaces will be forgotten, in the desire of a house not made with hands. The favour of the rich and great will be no more remembered, in the longing for the favour of the King of kings. The silks, and satins, and velvets, and laces, will be lost sight of in the anxious want of the robe of Christ's righteousness. All shall be altered, all shall be changed in the great day of the Lord's return. "Many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

It was a weighty saying of some wise man, that "hell is truth known too late." I fear that thousands of professing Christians in this day will find this out by experience. They will discover the value of their souls when it is too late to obtain mercy, and see the beauty of the Gospel when they can derive no benefit from it. Oh! that men would be wise betimes! I often think there are few passages of scripture more awful than that in the first chapter of Proverbs: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at

your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: They would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof: Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." (Prov. i. 24—31.)

Reader, you may possibly be one of those who neither like the faith nor practice which the Gospel of Christ requires. You think us extreme, when we beseech you to repent and be converted. You think we ask too much, when we urge you to come out from the world, and take up the cross, and follow Christ. But take notice that you will one day confess *that we were right*. Sooner or later, in this world or the next, you will acknowledge that you were wrong. Yes! it is a melancholy consideration for the faithful minister of the Gospel, that all who hear him will one day allow that his counsel was good. Mocked, despised, scorned, neglected as his testimony may be on earth, a day is coming which shall prove effectually that truth was on his side. The rich man who hears us and yet makes a god of this world,—the tradesman who hears us and yet makes his ledger his Bible,—the farmer who hears us and yet remains cold as the clay on his land,—the labourer who hears us and yet feels no more for his soul than a stone,—all, all will at length acknowledge before the world that they were wrong. All will at length desire earnestly

that very mercy which we now set before them in vain. "They will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

Reader, if you are one of those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, you may well take comfort when you look forward. You often suffer persecution now for your religion's sake. You have to bear hard words and unkind insinuations. Your motives are often misrepresented, and your conduct slandered. The reproach of the cross is not ceased. But you may well take courage when you look forward and think of the Lord's second coming. That day shall make amends for all. You will see those who now laugh at you because you read the Bible, and pray, and love Christ, in a very different state of mind. They will come to you, as the foolish virgins came to the wise, saying, "Give us of your oil, because our lamps are gone out." You will see those who now hate you and call you fools, because, like Caleb and Joshua, you bring up a good report of Christ's service, altered, changed, and no longer like the same men. They will say, "Oh! that we had taken part with you. You have been the truly wise, and we the foolish." Then fear not the reproach of men. Confess Christ boldly before the world. Shew your colours, and be not ashamed of your Master. Time is short. Eternity hastens on. The cross is only for a little season. The crown is for ever. Make sure work about that crown. Leave nothing uncertain. "Many shall seek to enter in, and will not be able."

And now let me offer to every one who reads this tract, a few words to apply the whole subject to his soul.

You have heard the words of the Lord Jesus unfolded and expounded. You have seen the picture of the way of salvation. It is a strait gate.—You have heard the command of the King, “Strive to enter in.”—You have been told of His solemn warning, “Many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”—Bear with me a little longer, while I try to impress the whole matter on your conscience. I have yet something to say on God’s behalf.

1. For one thing, I will ask you a plain question. *Have you entered in at the strait gate or not?* Old or young, rich or poor, churchman or dissenter, I repeat my question, Have you entered in at the strait gate?

I ask not whether you have heard of it, and believe there is a gate. I ask not whether you have looked at it, and admired it, and hope one day to go in. I ask whether you have gone up to it, knocked at it, been admitted, and *are now inside?*

If you are not inside, what good have you got from your religion? You are not pardoned and forgiven. You are not reconciled to God. You are not born again, sanctified, and meet for heaven. If you die as you are, the devil will have you for ever, and your soul will be eternally miserable.

Oh! think, think what a state this is to live in. Think, think above all things, what a state this is to die in. Your life is but a vapour. A few more years at most, and you are gone. Your place in the world will soon be filled up. Your house will be occupied by another. The sun will go on shining. The grass and

daisies will soon grow thick over your grave. Your body will be food for worms. And your soul will be lost to all eternity!

And all this time there stands open before you a gate of salvation. God invites you. Jesus Christ offers to save you. All things are ready for your deliverance. One thing only is wanting, and that is that you should be willing to be saved.

Oh! reader, think of these things, and be wise.

2. For another thing, I will give plain advice to all who are not yet inside the strait gate. That advice is simply this, *to enter in without a day's delay.*

Tell me, if you can, of any one who ever reached heaven excepting through "the strait gate." I know of none. From Abel, the first who died, down to the end of the list of Bible names, I see none saved by any way but that of faith in Christ.

Tell me, if you can, of any one who ever entered in at the strait gate without "striving." I know of none, excepting those who die in infancy. He that would win heaven must be content to fight for it.

Tell me, if you can, of any one who ever strove earnestly "to enter in," and failed to succeed. I know of none. I believe that however weak and ignorant men may be, they never seek life heartily and conscientiously, at the right door, and are left without an answer of peace.

Tell me, if you can, of any one who ever entered in at the strait gate, and was afterwards sorry. I know of none. I believe the footsteps of that gate are all one

way. All have found it a good thing to serve Christ, and have never regretted taking up His cross.

Oh! reader, if these things are so, seek Christ without delay, and enter in at the gate of life while you can. Make a beginning this very day. Go to that merciful and mighty Saviour in prayer, and pour out your heart before Him. Confess to Him your guilt, and wickedness, and sin. Unbosom yourself freely to Him. Keep nothing back. Tell Him that you cast yourself and all your soul's affairs wholly on His hands, and ask Him to save you according to His promise, and put His Holy Spirit within you.

There is everything *to encourage you to do this*. Thousands as bad as you have applied to Christ in this way, and not one of them has been sent away and refused. They have found a peace of conscience they never knew before, and gone on their way rejoicing. They have found strength for all the trials of life, and none of them have been allowed to perish in the wilderness. Reader, why should not you also seek Christ?

There is everything to encourage you to do what I tell you *at once*. I know no reason why your repentance and conversion should not be as immediate as that of others before you. The Samaritan woman came to the well an ignorant sinner, and returned to her home a new creature. The Philippian jailor turned from darkness to light, and became a professed disciple of Christ in a single day. And why should not others do the same? Reader, why should not you give up your sins, and lay hold on Christ this very day?

Reader, I know that the advice I have given you is good. The grand question is, Will you take it?

3. The last thing I have to say shall be a request to all who have really entered in at the strait gate. That request is, that you will *tell others* of the blessings which you have found.

I want all converted people to be missionaries. I do not want them all to go out to foreign lands, and preach to the heathen. But I do want all to be of a missionary spirit, and to strive to do good at home. I want them to testify to all around them that the strait gate is the way to happiness, and to persuade them to enter in by it.

When Andrew was converted he found his brother Peter, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah, which is being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus." (John i. 41, 42.) When Philip was converted he found Nathanael, and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said to him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? And Philip said to him, Come and see." (John i. 45, 46.) When the Samaritan woman was converted "She left her water-pot, and went into the city, and said to the men, Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?" (John iv. 28, 29.) When Saul the Pharisee was converted, "Straightway he preached Christ in the synagogue, that he is the Son of God." (Acts ix. 20.)

Reader, I long to see this kind of spirit among Christians in the present day. I long to see more zeal to commend the strait gate to all who are yet outside, and more desire to persuade them to enter in and be

saved. Happy indeed is that Church, whose members not only desire to reach heaven themselves, but desire also to take others with them!

The great gate of salvation is yet ready to open, but the hour draws near when it will be closed for ever. Let us work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh when no man can work. Let us tell our relations and friends, that we have proved the way of life and found it pleasant, that we have tasted the bread of life and found it good.

I have heard it calculated, that if every believer in the world were to bring one soul to Christ each year, the whole human race would be converted in less than twenty years. I make no comment on such a calculation. Whether such a thing might be or not, one thing is sure. That thing is, that many more *souls might probably be converted to God, if Christians were more zealous to do good.*

This, at least, we may remember, that God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." He that endeavours to show his neighbours the strait gate, is doing a work which God approves. He is doing a work which angels regard with interest, and with which the building of a pyramid will not compare in importance. For what saith the Scriptures, "He which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." (James v. 20.)

Reader, let us all awake to a deeper sense of our responsibility in this matter. Let us look round the circle of those among whom we live, and consider their

state before God. Are there not many of them yet outside the gate, unforgiven, unsanctified, and unfit to die? Let us watch for opportunities of speaking to them. Let us tell them of the strait gate, and entreat them to strive to enter in.

Who can tell what a word spoken in due season may do? Who can tell what it may do when spoken in faith and prayer? It may be the turning point in some man's history. It may be the beginning of thought, prayer, and eternal life. Oh! for more love and boldness among believers! Think what a blessing to be allowed to speak one converting word!

Reader, I know not what your feelings may be on this subject. My heart's desire and prayer is that you may daily remember Christ's solemn words, "Many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Keep these words in mind, and then be careless about the souls of others, if you can.

Lot's Wife.

LUKE XVII. 32.

"Remember Lot's Wife."

Reader,

There are few warnings in Scripture more solemn than that which stands before you. The Lord Jesus Christ says to us, "Remember Lot's wife."

Lot's wife was a professor of religion. Her husband was a "righteous man." (2 Peter ii. 18.) She left Sodom with him on the day when Sodom was destroyed. She looked back towards the city from behind her husband, against God's express command. She was struck dead at once, and turned into a pillar of salt. And the Lord Jesus Christ holds her up as a beacon to His Church. He says, "Remember Lot's wife."

It is a solemn warning, when you think of the person Jesus names. He does not bid us remember Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacob, or Sarah, or Hannah, or Ruth. No! He singles out one whose soul was lost for ever. He cries to us, "Remember Lot's wife."

It is a solemn warning, when you consider the subject Jesus is upon. He is speaking of His own second

coming to judge the world. He is describing the awful state of unreadiness in which many will be found. The last days are on His mind, when He says, "Remember Lot's wife."

It is a solemn warning, when you think of the person who gives it. The Lord Jesus is full of love, mercy, and compassion. He is one who will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. He could weep over unbelieving Jerusalem, and pray for the men that crucified Him. Yet even He thinks it good to remind us of lost souls. Even He says, "Remember Lot's wife."

It is a solemn warning, when you think of the persons to whom it was first given. The Lord Jesus was speaking to His disciples. He was not addressing the Scribes and Pharisees, who hated Him, but Peter, James, and John, and many others, who loved Him. Yet even to them He thinks it good to address a caution. Even to them He says, "Remember Lot's wife."

It is a solemn warning, when you consider the manner in which it was given. He does not merely say, "beware of following,—take heed of imitating,—do not be like Lot's wife." He uses a different word. He says "remember." He speaks as if we were all in danger of forgetting the subject. He stirs up our lazy memories. He bids us keep the case before our minds. He cries, "Remember Lot's wife."

Reader, I invite you this day to hear my Master's voice, and to give His servant a little of your attention. I am going to examine the lessons which Lot's wife is meant to teach us. I am sure that her history is full

state of obedience to God. Her affections were never really set upon things above. The form of religion which she had was kept up for fashion's sake, and not from feeling. It was a cloak worn for the sake of pleasing her company, but not from any sense of its value. She did as others did around her in Lot's house. She conformed to her husband's ways. She made no opposition to his religion. She allowed herself to be passively *towed along in his wake*. But all this time her heart was wrong in the sight of God. The world was in her heart, and her heart was in the world. In this state she lived, and in this state she died !

Reader, in all this there is much to be learned. I see a lesson here which is of the deepest importance in the present day. You live in times when there are many persons just like Lot's wife. Come and hear the lesson which her case is meant to teach.

Learn then, that *the mere possession of religious privileges will save no one's soul*. You may have spiritual advantages of every description. You may live in the full sunshine of the richest opportunities and means of grace. You may enjoy the best of preaching, and the choicest instruction. You may dwell in the midst of light, knowledge, holiness, and good company. All this may be, and yet you yourself may remain unconverted, and at last be lost for ever.

I dare say this doctrine sounds hard to some readers. I know that many fancy they want nothing but religious privileges, in order to become decided Christians. They are not what they ought to be at present, they allow. But their position is so hard, they plead, and their

difficulties so many. Give them a godly husband, or a godly wife,—give them godly companions, or a godly master,—give them the preaching of the Gospel,—give them privileges, and then they would walk with God.

It is all a mistake. It is an entire delusion. It requires something more than privileges to save souls. Joab was David's captain. Gehazi was Elisha's servant. Demas was Paul's companion. Judas Iscariot was Christ's disciple. And Lot had a worldly, unbelieving wife! These all died in their sins. They went down to the pit in spite of knowledge, warnings, and opportunities. And they all teach us that it is not privileges only that men need. *They need the grace of the Holy Ghost.*

Value religious privileges, reader, but do not rest entirely upon them. Desire to have the benefit of them in all your movements in life, but do not put them in the place of Christ. Use them thankfully, if God grants them to you, but see that they produce some fruit in your heart and life. If they do not do good they often do positive harm. They sear the conscience. They increase responsibility. They aggravate condemnation. The same fire which melts the wax hardens the clay. The same sun which makes the living tree grow, dries up the dead tree, and prepares it for burning. Nothing so hardens the heart of man as a barren familiarity with sacred things. Once more I say, it is not privileges alone which make people Christians, but *the grace of the Holy Ghost*. Without that no man will ever be saved.

I ask the members of evangelical congregations in the present day to mark well what I am saying. You go to Mr. A's, or Mr. B's church. You think him an

excellent preacher. You delight in his sermons. You cannot hear any one else with the same comfort. You have learned many things since you attended his ministry. You consider it a great privilege to be one of his hearers. All this is very good. It is a privilege. I should be thankful if ministers like yours were multiplied a thousandfold. But after all, what have you got in your heart? Have you yet received the Holy Ghost? If not, *you are no better than Lot's wife.*

I ask the servants of religious families to mark well what I am saying. It is a great privilege to live in a house where the fear of God reigns. It is a privilege to hear family prayers morning and evening, to hear the Word of God regularly expounded, to have a quiet Sunday, and to be able always to go to church. These are the things that you ought to seek after, when you try to get a situation. These are the things which make a really good place. High wages and light work will never make up for a constant round of worldliness, Sabbath-breaking, and sin. But take heed that you do not rest content with these things. Do not suppose that because you have all these spiritual advantages, you will of course go to heaven. You must have grace in your own heart, as well as attend family prayers. If not, *you are at present no better than Lot's wife.*

I ask the children of religious parents to mark well what I am saying. It is the highest privilege to be the child of a godly father and mother, and to be brought up in the midst of many prayers. It is a blessed thing indeed to be taught the Gospel from our earliest infancy, and to hear of sin, and Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, and

holiness, and heaven, from the first moment we can remember anything. But Oh! take heed that you do not remain barren and unfruitful in the sunshine of all these privileges. Beware lest your heart remains hard, impenitent and worldly, notwithstanding the many advantages you enjoy. You cannot enter the kingdom of God on the credit of your parents' religion. You must eat the bread of life for yourself, and have the witness of the Spirit in your own heart. You must have repentance of your own, faith of your own, and sanctification of your own. If not, *you are no better than Lot's wife.*

I pray God that all professing Christians in these days may lay these things to heart. May we never forget that privileges alone cannot save us. Light and knowledge, and faithful preaching, and abundant means of grace, and the company of holy people, are all great blessings and advantages. Happy are they that have them! But after all, there is one thing without which privileges are useless. That one thing is the grace of the Holy Ghost. Lot's wife had many privileges. But Lot's wife had no grace.

II. I will next speak of *the sin which Lot's wife committed.*

The history of her sin is given by the Holy Ghost in few and simple words. "She looked back from behind her husband, and she became a pillar of salt." We are told no more than this. There is a naked solemnity about the history. The sum and substance of her transgression lies in these three words, "she looked back."

Reader, does that sin seem small in your eyes? Does

the fault of Lot's wife appear a trifling one to be visited with such a punishment? This is the feeling, I dare say, that rises in your heart. Give me your attention while I reason with you on the subject. There was far more in that look than strikes you at first sight. It implied far more than it expressed. Listen and you shall hear.

That look was a little thing, but *it revealed the true character* of Lot's wife. Little things will often shew the state of a man's mind even better than great ones, and little symptoms are often the signs of deadly and incurable diseases. The apple that Eve ate was a little thing, but it proved that she had fallen from innocence and became a sinner. A crack in an arch seems a little thing, but it proves that the foundation is giving way, and the whole fabric is unsafe. A little cough in a morning seems an unimportant ailment, but it is often an evidence of failing in the constitution, and leads on to decline, consumption, and death. A straw may shew which way the wind blows, and one look may shew the rotten condition of a sinner's heart. (Matt. v. 28.)

That look was a little thing, but *it told of disobedience* in Lot's wife. The command of the angel was strait and unmistakeable, "Look not behind thee." (Gen. xiv. 17.) This command Lot's wife refused to obey. But the Holy Ghost says, that "to obey is better than sacrifice," and that "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft." (1 Sam. xv. 22, 23.) When God speaks plainly by His Word or by His messengers, man's duty is clear.

That look was a little thing, but *it told of proud unbelief* in Lot's wife. She seemed to doubt whether God

was really going to destroy Sodom. She appeared not to believe there was any danger, or any need for such a hasty flight. But without faith it is impossible to please God. (Heb. xi. 7.) The moment a man begins to think he knows better than God, and that God does not mean anything when He threatens, his soul is in great danger. When we cannot see the reason of God's dealings, our duty is to hold our peace and believe.

That look was a little thing, but *it told of secret love of the world* in Lot's wife. Her heart was in Sodom, though her body was outside. She had left her affections behind when she fled from her home. Her eye turned to the place where her treasure was, as the compass-needle turns to the pole. And this was the crowning point of her sin. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." (James iv. 4.) "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John ii. 15.)

Reader, I ask your special attention to this part of our subject. I believe it to be the part to which the Lord Jesus particularly intends to direct our minds. I believe He would have us observe that Lot's wife was lost by looking back to the world. Her profession was at one time fair and specious; but she never really gave up the world. She seemed at one time in the road to safety; but even then the lowest and deepest thoughts of her heart were for the world. *The immense danger of worldliness* is the grand lesson which the Lord Jesus means us to learn. Oh! that we may all have an eye to see and a heart to understand!

I believe there never was a time when warnings

against worldliness were so much needed by the Church of Christ as they are at the present day. Every age is said to have its own peculiar epidemic disease. The epidemic disease to which the souls of Christians are liable just now, is the love of the world. It is a pestilence that walketh in darkness, and a sickness that destroyeth at noonday. It "hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been wounded by it." I would fain raise a warning voice, and try to arouse the slumbering consciences of all who make a profession of religion. I would fain cry aloud, "Remember the sin of Lot's wife." She was no murderess, no adulteress, no thief. But she was a professor of religion, and she "looked back."

There are thousands of baptized persons in our churches who are proof against immorality and infidelity, and yet fall victims to the love of the world. There are thousands who run well for a season, and seem to bid fair to reach heaven, but by and bye give up the race, and turn their backs on Christ altogether. And what has stopped them? Have they found the Bible not true? Have they found the Lord Jesus fail to keep His word?—No! not at all. But they have caught the epidemic disease. They are infected with the love of this world. I appeal to every true-hearted evangelical minister who reads this tract. I ask him to look round his congregation. I appeal to every old-established Christian. I ask him to look round the circle of his acquaintance. I am sure that I am speaking the truth. I am sure that it is high time to remember the sin of Lot's wife.

How many *children of religious families* begin well and end ill! In the days of their childhood they seem full of religion. They can repeat texts and hymns in abundance. They have spiritual feelings and convictions of sin. They profess love to the Lord Jesus and desires after heaven. They take pleasure in going to church and hearing sermons. They say things which are treasured up by their fond parents as indications of grace. They do things which make relations say, "what manner of child will this be?" But alas! how often their goodness vanishes like the morning cloud, and like the dew that passes away. The boy becomes a young man, and cares for nothing but amusements, field-sports, revelling and excess. The girl becomes a young woman, and cares for nothing but dress, gay company, novel-reading, and excitement. Where is the spirituality which once appeared to promise so fair? It is all gone. It is buried. It is overflowed by the love of the world. They walk in the steps of Lot's wife. *They look back.*

How many *married people* do well in religion to all appearance, until their children begin to grow up,—and then they fall away! In the early years of their married life they seem to follow Christ diligently, and to witness a good confession. They regularly attend the preaching of the Gospel. They are fruitful in good works. They are never seen in vain and dissipated society. Their faith and practice are both sound, and walk hand in hand. But alas! how often a spiritual blight comes over the household, when a young family begins to grow up, and sons and daughters

have to be brought forward in life. A leaven of worldliness begins to appear in their habits, dress, entertainments, and employment of time. They are no longer strict about the company they keep, and the places they visit. Where is the decided line of separation, which they once observed? Where is the unswerving abstinence from worldly amusements, which once marked their course? It is all forgotten. It is all laid aside, like an old almanack. A change has come over them. The spirit of the world has taken possession of their hearts. They walk in the steps of Lot's wife. *They look back.*

How many *young women* seem to love decided religion until they are twenty or twenty-one, and then lose all! Up to this time of their life their conduct in religious matters is all that could be desired. They keep up habits of private prayer. They read their Bibles diligently. They visit the poor, when they have opportunity. They teach in Sunday schools, when there is an opening. They minister to the temporal and spiritual wants of the poor. They like religious friends. They love to talk on religious subjects. They write letters full of religious expressions and religious experience. But alas! how often they prove unstable as water, and are ruined by the love of the world! Little by little they fall away and lose their first love. Little by little the things seen push out of their minds the things unseen, and, like the plague of locusts, eat up "every green thing" in their souls. Step by step they go back from the decided position they once took up. They cease to be jealous

about sound doctrine. They pretend to find out that it is "uncharitable" to think one person has more religion than another! They discover it is "exclusive" to attempt any separation from the customs of society! By and by they give their affections to some man who makes no pretence to decided religion. At last they end by giving up the last remnant of their own Christianity, and becoming thorough children of the world. They walk in the steps of Lot's wife. *They look back.*

How many *communicants* in our churches were at one time zealous and earnest professors, and have now become torpid, formal, and cold! Time was when none seemed so much alive in religion as they were. None were so diligent in their attendance on the means of grace. None were so anxious to promote the cause of the Gospel, and so ready for every good work. None were so thankful for spiritual instruction. None were apparently so desirous to grow in grace. But now alas! everything seems altered. The "love of other things" has taken possession of their hearts, and choked the good seed of the Word. The money of the world, the rewards of the world, the literature of the world, the honours of the world, have now the first place in their affections. Talk to them, and you will find no response about spiritual things. Mark their daily conduct, and you will see no zeal about the kingdom of God. A religion they have indeed, but it is living religion no more. The spring of their former Christianity is dried up and gone. The fire of the spiritual machine is quenched and cold. Earth

has put out the flame which once burned so brightly. They have walked in the steps of Lot's wife. They have *looked back*.

How many *clergymen* work hard in their profession for a few years, and then become lazy and indolent from the love of this present world! At the outset of their ministry they seem willing to spend and be spent for Christ. They are instant in season and out of season. Their preaching is lively, and their churches are filled. Their congregations are well looked after. Cottage lectures, prayer-meetings, house-to-house visitations, are their weekly delight. But alas! how often, after beginning in the Spirit, they end in the flesh, and, like Samson, are shorn of their strength in the lap of that Delilah, the world. They are preferred to some rich living. They marry a worldly wife. They are puffed up with pride, and neglect study and prayer. A nipping frost cuts off the spiritual blossoms which once bade so fair. Their preaching loses its unction and power. Their week-day work becomes less and less. The society they mix in becomes less select. The tone of their conversation becomes more earthly. They cease to disregard the opinion of man. They imbibe a morbid fear of "extreme views," and are filled with a cautious dread of giving offence. And at last the man who at one time seemed likely to be a real successor of the apostle and a good soldier of Christ, settles down on his lees as a clerical gardener, farmer, or diner-out, by whom nobody is offended and nobody is saved. His church becomes half empty, His influence dwindles away. The world has bound him hand and foot. He

has walked in the steps of Lot's wife. He has *looked back*.*

Ah! reader, it is sad to write of these things, but it is far more sad to see them. It is sad to observe how professing Christians can blind their consciences by specious arguments on this subject, and can defend positive worldliness by talking of the "duties of their station," the "courtesies of life," and the necessity of having a "cheerful religion."

It is sad to see how many a gallant ship launches forth on the voyage of life with every prospect of success, and springing this leak of worldliness, goes down with all her freight in full view of the harbour of safety. It is saddest of all to observe how many flatter themselves it is all right with their souls when it is all wrong, by reason of this love of the world. Grey hairs are here and there upon them, and they know it not. They began with Jacob, and David, and Peter, and they are likely to end with Esau, and Saul, and Judas Iscariot. They began with Ruth, and Hannah, and Mary, and Persis, and they are likely to end with Lot's wife.

Reader, beware of a half-hearted religion. Beware of following Christ from any secondary motive, — to

* "Remember Dr. Dodd! I myself heard him tell his own flock, whom he was lecturing in his house, that he was obliged to give up that method of helping their souls, because it exposed him to so much reproach. He gave it up, and fell from one compliance to another with his corrupt nature;—and under what reproach did he die!" (He was hanged for forgery.) *Venn's Life and Letters*, p. 238. *Edit.* 1863.

please relations and friends,—to keep in with the custom of the place or family in which you reside,—to appear respectable and have the reputation of being religious. Follow Christ for His own sake, if you follow Him at all. Be thorough. Be real. Be honest. Be sound. Be whole-hearted. If you have any religion at all, let your religion be real. See that you do not sin the sin of Lot's wife.

Beware of ever supposing that you may go too far in religion, and of secretly trying to keep in with the world. I want no reader of my tracts to become a hermit, a monk, or a nun. I wish every one to do his real duty in that state of life to which he is called. But I do urge on every professing Christian who wishes to be happy, the immense importance of making no compromise between God and the world. Do not try to drive a hard bargain, as if you wanted to give Christ as little of your heart as possible, and to keep as much as possible of the things of this life. Beware lest you overreach yourself, and end by losing all. Love Christ with all your heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. Seek first the kingdom of God, and believe that then all other things shall be added to you. Take heed that you do not prove a copy of the character John Bunyan draws, Mr. Facing-both-ways. For your happiness' sake, for your usefulness' sake, for your safety's sake, for your soul's sake, beware of the sin of Lot's wife. Oh! it is a solemn saying of our Lord Jesus, "No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke ix. 62.)

III. I will now speak, in the last place, of *the punishment which God inflicted on Lot's wife.*

The Scripture describes her end in few and simple words. It is written that "she looked back and became a pillar of salt." A miracle was wrought to execute God's judgment on this guilty woman. The same almighty hand which first gave her life, took that life away in the twinkling of an eye. From living flesh and blood she was turned into a pillar of salt.

Reader, that was a *fearful end* for a soul to come to! To die at any time is a solemn thing. To die amidst kind friends and relations,—to die calmly and quietly in one's bed,—to die with the prayers of godly men still sounding in our ears,—to die with a good hope through grace in the full assurance of salvation, leaning on the Lord Jesus, buoyed up by Gospel promises,—to die even so, I say, is a serious business. But to die in the very act of sin,—to die in full health and strength,—to die by the direct interposition of an angry God,—this is fearful indeed. Yet this was the end of Lot's wife.

Reader, that was a *hopeless end* for a soul to come to! There are cases where one hopes, as it were, against hope, about the souls of those we see go down to the grave. We try to persuade ourselves that our poor departing brother or sister may have repented unto salvation at the last moment, and laid hold on the hem of Christ's garment at the eleventh hour. We call to mind God's mercies. We remember the Spirit's power. We think on the case of the penitent thief. We whisper to ourselves, that saving work *may* have gone on even on that dying bed, which the dying person had not

strength to tell. But there is an end of all such hopes, when a person is suddenly cut down in the very act of sin. Charity itself can say nothing when the soul has been summoned away in the very midst of wickedness, without even a moment's time for thought or prayer. Such was the end of Lot's wife. It was a hopeless end. She went to hell.

But it is good for us all to mark these things. It is good to be reminded that God can punish sharply those who sin wilfully, and that great privileges misused bring down great wrath on the soul. Pharaoh saw all the miracles which Moses worked. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram had heard God speaking from Mount Sinai. Hophni and Phinehas were sons of God's High Priest. Saul lived in the full light of Samuel's ministry. Ahab was often warned by Elijah the prophet. Absalom enjoyed the privilege of being one of David's children. Belshazzar had Daniel the prophet hard by his door. Ananias and Sapphira joined the church in the days when the apostles were working miracles. Judas Iscariot was a chosen companion of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. But they all sinned with a high hand against light and knowledge. And they were all suddenly destroyed without remedy. They had no time or space for repentance. As they lived so they died. As they were they were hurried away to meet God. They went with all their sins upon them, unpardoned, unrenewed, and utterly unfit for heaven. And being dead they yet speak. They tell us, like Lot's wife, that it is a perilous thing to sin against light, that God hates sin, and that there is a hell.

Reader, suffer me to speak freely with you on the subject of hell. Suffer me to use the opportunity which the end of Lot's wife affords. I believe the time is come, when it is a positive duty to speak plainly about the reality and eternity of hell. A flood of false doctrine has lately broken in upon us. Men are beginning to tell us "that God is too merciful to punish souls for ever,—that there is a love of God lower even than hell,—and that all mankind, however wicked and ungodly some of them may be, will sooner or later be saved." We are invited to leave the old paths of apostolic Christianity. We are told that our fathers' views about hell, and the devil, and punishment, are obsolete and old fashioned. We are to embrace what is called a "kinder theology," and treat hell as a Pagan fable, or a bugbear to frighten children and fools. Against such false teaching I desire, for one, to protest. Painful, sorrowful, distressing as the controversy may be, we must not blink it, or refuse to look the subject in the face. I, for one, am resolved to maintain the old position, and to assert the reality and eternity of hell.

Believe me, this is no mere speculative question. It is not to be classed with disputes about liturgies and church government. It is not to be ranked with mysterious problems, like the meaning of Ezekiel's temple, or the symbols of Revelation. It is a question which lies at the very foundation of the whole Gospel. The moral attributes of God, His justice, His holiness, His purity, are all involved in it. The necessity of personal faith in Christ, and the sanctification of the Spirit, are all at stake. Once let the old doctrine about hell be

overthrown, and the whole system of Christianity is unsettled, unscrewed, unpinned, and thrown into disorder.

Believe me, the question is not one in which we are obliged to fall back on the theories and inventions of man. The Scripture has spoken plainly and fully on the subject of hell. I hold it to be impossible to deal honestly with the Bible, and to avoid the conclusions to which it will lead us on this point. If words mean anything, there is such a place as hell. If texts are to be interpreted fairly, there are those who will be cast into it. If language has any sense belonging to it, hell is for ever. I believe that the man who finds arguments for evading the evidence of the Bible on this question, has arrived at a state of mind in which reasoning is useless. For my own part, it seems just as easy to argue that we do not exist, as to argue that the Bible does not teach the reality and eternity of hell.

Settle it then firmly in your mind, that the same Bible which teaches that God in mercy and compassion sent Christ to die for sinners, does also teach that God hates sin, and must from His very nature punish all who cleave to sin, or refuse the salvation He has provided. The very same chapter which declares, "God so loved the world," declares also, that "the wrath of God abideth" on the unbeliever. (John iii. 16, 36.) The very same Gospel which is launched into the earth with the blessed tidings, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," proclaims in the same breath, "He that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 16.)

Settle it firmly in your mind, that God has given us

proof upon proof in the Bible that He will punish the hardened and unbelieving, and that He can take vengeance on His enemies, as well as show mercy to the penitent. The drowning of the old world by the flood,—the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah,—the overthrow of Pharaoh and all his host,—the judgment on Korah, Dathan, and Abiram,—the utter destruction of the seven nations of Canaan, all teach the same awful truth. They are all given to us as beacons, and signs, and warnings, that we may not provoke God. They are all meant to lift up the corner of the curtain which hangs over things to come, and to remind us that there is such a thing as the wrath of God. They all tell us plainly that “the wicked shall be turned into hell.” (Psalm ix. 17.)

Settle it firmly in your mind, that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has spoken most plainly about the reality and eternity of hell. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus contains things which should make men tremble. But it does not stand alone. No lips have used so many words to express the awfulness of hell, as the lips of Him who spake as never man spake, and who said, “the word which ye hear is not mine but his that sent me.” (John xiv. 24.) Hell,—hell-fire,—the damnation of hell,—eternal damnation,—the resurrection of damnation,—everlasting fire,—the place of torment,—destruction,—outer darkness,—the worm that never dies,—the fire that is not quenched,—the place of weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth,—everlasting punishment,—these, these are the words which the Lord Jesus Christ Himself employs. Away with the miserable

nonsense which people talk in this day, who tell us that the ministers of the Gospel should never speak of hell ! They only show their own ignorance, or their own dishonesty, when they talk in such a manner. No man can honestly read the four Gospels and fail to see that he who would follow the example of Christ, *must* speak of hell.

Settle it, lastly, in your mind, that the comforting ideas which the Scripture gives us of heaven are at an end, if we once deny the reality or eternity of hell. Is there no future separate abode for those who die wicked and ungodly ? Are all men after death to be mingled together in one confused multitude ? Why then, heaven will be no heaven at all. It is utterly impossible for two to dwell happily together except they be agreed.— Is there to be a time when the term of hell and punishment will be over ? Are the wicked after ages of misery to be admitted into heaven ? Why then, the need of the sanctification of the Spirit is cast aside and despised. I read that men can be sanctified and made meet for heaven on earth. I read nothing of any sanctification in hell. Away with such baseless and unscriptural theories ! The eternity of hell is as clearly affirmed in the Bible, as the eternity of heaven. Once allow that hell is not eternal, and you may as well say that God and heaven are not eternal. The same Greek word which is used in the expression, “everlasting punishment,” is the word that is used by the Lord Jesus in the expression, “life eternal,” and by St. Paul, in the expression, “everlasting God.” (Matt. xxv. 46 ; Rom. xvi. 26.)

Reader, I know that all this sounds dreadful in many ears. I do not wonder. But the only question we have to settle is this,—Is it Scriptural? Is it true?—I maintain firmly that it is so, and I maintain that professing Christians ought to be often reminded, that they may be lost and go to hell.

I know that it is easy to deny all plain teaching about hell, and to make it odious by invidious names. I have often heard of “narrow-minded views, and old fashioned notions, and brimstone theology,” and the like. I have often been told that “broad” views are wanted in the present day. I wish to be as broad as the Bible, neither less or more. I say that he is the narrow-minded theologian, who pares down such parts of the Bible as the natural heart dislikes, and rejects any portion of the counsel of God.

God knows that I never speak of hell without pain and sorrow. I would gladly offer the salvation of the Gospel to the very chief of sinners. I would willingly say to the vilest and most profligate of mankind on his death-bed, “repent, and believe on Jesus, and thou shalt be saved.” But God forbid that I should ever keep back from mortal man, that Scripture reveals a hell as well as heaven, and that the Gospel teaches that men may be lost as well as saved. The watchman who keeps silence, when he sees a fire, is guilty of gross neglect. The doctor who tells us we are getting well, when we are dying, is a false friend. And the minister who keeps back hell from his people in his sermons, is neither a faithful nor a charitable man.

Where is the charity of keeping back any portion of

God's truth? He is the kindest friend, who tells me the whole extent of my danger. Where is the use of hiding the future from the impenitent and the ungodly? Surely it is like helping the devil, if we do not tell them plainly that "the soul that sinneth shall surely die." Who knows but the wretched carelessness of many baptized persons arises from this, that they have never been told plainly of hell? Who can tell but thousands might be converted, if ministers would urge them more faithfully to flee from the wrath to come? Verily, I fear, we are many of us guilty in this matter. There is a morbid tenderness amongst us, which is not the tenderness of Christ. We have spoken of mercy, but not of judgment. We have preached many sermons about heaven, but few about hell. We have been carried away by the wretched fear of being thought "low, vulgar, and fanatical." We have forgotten that He who judgeth us is the Lord, and that the man who teaches the same doctrine that Christ taught, cannot be wrong.

Reader, if you would ever be a healthy scriptural Christian, I entreat you to *give hell a place in your theology*. Establish it in your mind as a fixed principle, that God is a God of judgment, as well as of mercy, and that the same everlasting counsels which laid the foundation of the bliss of heaven, have also laid the foundation of the misery of hell. Keep in full view of your mind, that all who die unpardoned and unrenewed, are utterly unfit for the presence of God, and must be lost for ever. They are not capable of enjoying heaven. They could not be happy there. They must

go to "their own place." And that place is hell.—Oh! it is a great thing in these days of unbelief to believe the whole Bible.

Reader, if you would ever be a healthy and scriptural Christian, I entreat you to *beware of any ministry, which does not plainly teach the reality and eternity of hell*. Such a ministry may be soothing and pleasant, but it is far more likely to lull you to sleep than to lead you to Christ, or build you up in the faith. It is impossible to leave out any portion of God's truth without spoiling the whole. That preaching is sadly defective, that dwells exclusively on the mercies of God and the joys of heaven, and never sets forth the terrors of the Lord and the miseries of hell. It may be popular, but it is not scriptural. It may amuse and gratify, but it will not save. Give me the preaching which keeps back nothing that God has revealed. You may call it stern and harsh. You may tell us that to frighten people is not the way to do them good. But you are forgetting that the grand object of the Gospel is to persuade men to flee from the wrath to come, and that it is vain to expect men to flee unless they are afraid. Well would it be for many professing Christians, if they were more afraid about their souls than they now are!

Reader, if you desire to be a healthy Christian, *consider often what your own end will be*. Will it be happiness or will it be misery? Will it be the death of the righteous, or will it be a death without hope, like that of Lot's wife. You cannot live always. There must be an end one day. The last sermon will one day

be heard. The last prayer will one day be prayed. The last chapter in the Bible will one day be read. Meaning, wishing, hoping, intending, resolving, doubting, hesitating, all will at length be over. You will have to leave this world, and to stand before a holy God. Oh! that you would be wise! Oh! that you would consider your latter end!

You cannot trifle for ever. A time will come, when you must be serious. You cannot put off your soul's concerns for ever. A day will come, when you must have a reckoning with God. You cannot be always singing, and dancing, and eating, and drinking, and dressing, and reading, and laughing, and jesting, and scheming, and planning, and money-making. The summer insects cannot always sport in the sunshine. The cold chilly evening will come at last, and stop their sport for ever. So will it be with you. You may put off religion now, and refuse the counsel of Christ's ministers. But the cool of the day is drawing on, when God will come down to speak with you. And what will your end be? Will it be a hopeless one, like that of Lot's wife?

Reader, I beseech you by the mercies of God, to look this question fairly in the face. I entreat you not to stifle conscience by vague hopes of God's mercy, while your heart cleaves to the world. I implore you not to drown convictions by childish fancies about God's love, while your daily ways and habits show plainly that "the love of the Father is not in you." There is mercy in God, like a river, but it is for the penitent believer in Christ Jesus. There is a love in God towards sinners

which is unspeakable and unsearchable, but it is for those who hear Christ's voice and follow Him. Seek to have an interest in that love. Break off every known sin. Come out boldly from the world. Cry mightily to God in prayer. Cast yourself wholly and unreservedly on the Lord Jesus for time and eternity. Lay aside every weight. Cling to nothing, however dear, which interferes with your soul's salvation. Give up everything, however precious, which comes between you and heaven. This old shipwrecked world is fast sinking beneath your feet. The one thing needful is to have a place in the life-boat, and get safe to shore. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure. Whatever happens to your house and property, see that you make sure of heaven. Oh! better a million times be laughed at and thought "extreme" in this world, than go down to hell from the midst of the congregation, and end like Lot's wife!

And now, reader, let me conclude this tract by offering you a few questions to impress the subject on your soul. You have seen the history of Lot's wife, her privileges, her sin, and her end. You have been told of the uselessness of privileges without the gift of the Holy Ghost,—of the danger of worldliness,—and of the reality of hell. Suffer me to wind up all by a few direct appeals to your own conscience. In a day of much light, and knowledge, and profession, I desire to set up a beacon to preserve souls from shipwreck. I would fain moor a buoy in the channel of all spiritual voyagers, and paint upon it, "*Remember Lot's wife.*"

Are you careless about the second advent of Christ?

Alas! many are. They live like the men of Sodom, and the men of Noah's day. They eat, and drink, and plant, and build, and marry, and are given in marriage, and behave as if Christ was never going to return. Reader, if you are such an one, I say to you this day, Take care, "*remember Lot's wife.*"

Are you lukewarm, and cold in your Christianity? Alas! many are. They try to serve two masters. They labour to keep friends both with God and mammon. They strive to be a kind of spiritual bat, neither one thing nor the other, not quite thorough-going Christians, but not quite men of the world. Reader, if you are such an one, I say to you this day, Take care, "*remember Lot's wife.*"

Are you halting between two opinions, and disposed to go back to the world? Alas! many are. They are afraid of the cross. They secretly dislike the trouble and reproach of decided religion. They are weary of the wilderness and the manna, and would fain return to Egypt, if they could. Reader, if you are such an one, I say to you this day, Take care, "*remember Lot's wife.*"

Are you secretly cherishing some besetting sin? Alas! many are. They go far in a profession of religion. They do many things that are right, and are very like the people of God. But there is always some darling evil habit, which they cannot tear from their heart. Hidden worldliness, or covetousness, or lust, sticks to them like their skin. They are willing to see all their idols broken, but this one. Reader, if you are such an one, I say to you this day, Take care, "*remember Lot's wife.*"

Are you trifling with little sins? Alas! many are. They hold the great essential doctrines of the Gospel. They keep clear of all gross profligacy, or open breaches of God's law. But they are painfully careless about little inconsistencies, and painfully ready to make excuses for them. "It is only a little temper, or a little levity, or a little thoughtlessness, or a little forgetfulness," they tell us. "God does not take account of such little matters. We are none of us perfect. God will never require it." Reader, if you are such an one, I say to you this day, Take care, "*remember Lot's wife.*"

Are you resting on religious privileges? Alas! many do. They enjoy the opportunity of hearing the Gospel regularly preached, and of attending many ordinances, and means of grace. And they settle down on their lees. They seem to be rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, while they have neither faith, nor grace, nor spiritual-mindedness, nor meetness for heaven. Reader, if you are such an one, I say to you this day, Take care, "*remember Lot's wife.*"

Are you trusting to your religious knowledge? Alas! many do. They are not ignorant as other men! They know the difference between true doctrine and false! They can dispute. They can reason. They can argue. They can quote texts. But all this time they are not converted, and they are yet dead in trespasses and sins. Reader, if you are such an one, I say to you this day, Take care, "*remember Lot's wife.*"

Are you making some profession of religion, and yet clinging to the world? Alas! many do. They aim at

being thought Christians. They like the credit of being serious, steady, proper, regular church-going people. Yet all the while their dress, their tastes, their companions, their entertainments, tell plainly they are of the world. Reader, if you are such an one, I say to you this day, Take care, "*remember Lot's wife.*"

Are you trusting that you will have a death-bed repentance? Alas! many do so. They know they are not what they ought to be. They are not yet born again, and fit to die. But they flatter themselves that when their last illness comes, they shall have time to repent and lay hold on Christ, and go out of the world pardoned, sanctified, and meet for heaven. They forget that people often die very suddenly, and that as they live they generally die. Reader, if you are such an one, I say to you this day, Take care, "*remember Lot's wife.*"

Do you belong to an evangelical congregation? Many do, and alas! go no further. They hear the truth Sunday after Sunday, and remain as hard as the nether millstone. Sermon after sermon sounds in their ears. Month after month they are invited to repent, to believe, to come to Christ, and to be saved. Year after year passes away, and they are not changed. They keep their seat under the teaching of a favourite minister, and they also keep their favourite sins. Reader, if you are such an one, I say to you this day, Take care, "*remember Lot's wife.*"

Oh! may these solemn words of our Lord Jesus Christ be deeply graven on all our hearts! May they awaken us when we feel sleepy,—revive us when we feel dead,

—sharpen us when we feel dull,—warm us when we feel cold! May they prove a spur to quicken us when we are falling back, and a bridle to check us when we are turning aside! May they be a shield to defend us, when Satan casts a subtle temptation at our heart, and a sword to fight with, when he says boldly, Give up Christ and follow me! Oh! may we say in such hours of trial, “Come, O my soul, remember thy Saviour’s warning! Soul, soul, hast thou forgotten His words? Soul, soul, ‘REMEMBER LOT’S WIFE!’”

“Never Perish.”

JOHN X. 28.

“They shall never Perish.”

Reader,

There are two points in religion, on which the teaching of the Bible is very plain and distinct. One of these points is the fearful danger of the ungodly: the other is the perfect safety of the righteous. One is the happiness of those who are converted: the other is the misery of those who are unconverted. One is the blessedness of being in the way to heaven: the other is the wretchedness of being in the way to hell.

I hold it to be of the utmost importance that these two points should be constantly impressed on the minds of professing Christians. I believe that the exceeding privileges of the children of God and the deadly peril of the children of the world, should be continually set forth in the clearest colours before the Church of Christ. I believe that the difference between the man in Christ and the man not in Christ, can never be stated too strongly and too fully. Reserve on this subject is a

positive injury to the souls of men. Wherever such reserve is practised, the careless will not be aroused, believers will not be established, and the cause of God will receive damage.

Reader, perhaps you are not aware what a vast store of comfortable truths the Bible contains for the peculiar benefit of real Christians. There is a spiritual treasure-house in the Word which many never enter, and some eyes have not so much as seen. There you will find many a golden verity besides the old first principles of repentance, faith, and conversion. There you will see in glorious array the everlasting election of the saints in Christ,—the special love wherewith God loved them before the foundation of the world,—their mystical union with their risen Head in heaven, and His consequent sympathy with them,—their interest in the perpetual intercession of Jesus their High Priest,—their liberty of daily communion with the Father and the Son,—their full assurance of hope,—their perseverance to the end. These are some of the precious things laid up in Scripture for those who love God. These are truths which some neglect from ignorance. Like the Spaniards in California, they know not the rich mines beneath their feet. These are truths which some neglect from false humility. They look at them afar off, with fear and trembling, but dare not touch them. But these are truths which God has given for our learning, and which you and I are bound to study. It is impossible to neglect them without inflicting injury upon ourselves.

It is to one special truth in the list of a believer's

privileges that I now desire to direct your attention this day. That truth is *the doctrine of perseverance*—the doctrine that true Christians shall never perish or be cast away. It is a truth which the natural heart has bitterly opposed in every age. It is a truth which for many reasons deserves particular attention at the present time. Above all, it is a truth with which the happiness of all God's children is most closely connected.

There are four things which I propose to do in considering the subject of perseverance.

I. I will explain what the doctrine of perseverance means.

II. I will show the scriptural grounds on which the doctrine is built.

III. I will point out some reasons why many reject the doctrine.

IV. I will mention some reasons why the doctrine is of great practical importance.

I approach the subject with diffidence, because I know it is one on which holy men do not see alike. But God is my witness, that in writing this tract, I have no desire to promote any cause but that of scriptural truth. In pleading for perseverance, I can say with a good conscience, that I firmly believe I am pleading for an important part of the Gospel of Christ. May God the Spirit guide both writer and reader int

all truth! May that blessed day soon come, when all shall know the Lord perfectly, and differences and divisions pass away for ever!

I. I will first explain *what I mean by the doctrine of perseverance.*

It is of the utmost importance to make this point clear. It is the very foundation of the subject. It lies at the threshold of the whole argument. In all discussions of disputed points in theology it is impossible to be too accurate in defining terms. Half the abuse which has unhappily been poured on perseverance, has arisen from a thorough misunderstanding of the doctrine in question. Its adversaries have fought with phantoms of their own creation, and spent their strength in beating the air.

When I speak of the doctrine of perseverance I mean this. I say that the Bible teaches that true Christians shall persevere in their religion to the end of their lives. They shall never perish. They shall never be lost. They shall never be cast away. Once in Christ, they shall always be in Christ. Once made children of God by adoption and grace, they shall never cease to be His children, and become children of the devil. Once endued with the grace of the Spirit, that grace shall never be taken from them. Once pardoned and forgiven, they shall never be deprived of their pardon. Once joined to Christ by living faith, their union shall never be broken off. Once called by God into the narrow way that leads to life, they shall never be allowed to fall into hell. In a word, every man, woman,

and child on earth that receives saving grace, shall sooner or later receive eternal glory. Every soul that is once justified and washed in Christ's blood, shall at length be found safe at Christ's right hand in the day of judgment.

Reader, such statements as this sound tremendously strong. I know that well. But I am not going to leave the subject here. I must dwell upon it a little longer. I desire to clear the doctrine I am defending from the cloud of misrepresentation by which many darken it. I want you to see it in its own proper dress,—not as it is pourtrayed by the hand of ignorance and prejudice, but as it is set forth in the Scripture of truth.

Perseverance is a doctrine with which the ungodly and worldly have nothing to do. It does not belong to that vast multitude who have neither knowledge nor thought, nor faith nor fear, nor anything else of Christianity except the name. It is not true of them, that they will "never perish." On the contrary, except they repent, they will come to a miserable end.

Perseverance is a doctrine with which hypocrites and false professors have nothing to do. It does not belong to those unhappy people whose religion consists in talk and words and a form of godliness, while their hearts are destitute of the grace of the Spirit. It is not true of them, that they will "never perish." On the contrary, except they repent, they will be lost for ever.*

* "We do not hold that all whom the most discerning minister or Christian considers true Christians, will be 'kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' God alone can search the

Perseverance is *the peculiar privilege of real, true, spiritual Christians*. It belongs to the sheep of Christ who hear His voice and follow Him. It belongs to those who are washed, and justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God. It belongs to those who repent, and believe in Christ, and live holy lives. It belongs to those who have been born again, and converted, and made new creatures by the Holy Ghost. It belongs to those who are of a broken and contrite heart, and mind the things of the Spirit, and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. It belongs to the elect of God, who cry to Him night and day. It belongs to those who know the Lord Jesus by experience, and have faith, and hope, and charity. It belongs to those who are the fruit-bearing branches of the vine,—the wise virgins,—the light of the world,—the salt of the earth,—the heirs of the kingdom,—the followers of the Lamb. These are they whom the Bible calls the saints. And it is the saints and the saints alone of whom it is written that they shall “never perish.” *

Does any one suppose that what I am saying applies to none but eminent saints? Does any one think that people like the apostles, and prophets, and martyrs may

heart, and He may see that to be a dead and temporary faith, which we in the judgment of charity think living and permanent.”—*Scott's Reply to Tomline*, page 675.

* “It is grossly contrary to the truth of the Scriptures to imagine that they who are thus renewed, can be unborn again.”—*Archbishop Leighton*. 1680.

perhaps persevere to the end, but that it cannot be said of the common sort of believers? Let him know that he is entirely mistaken. Let him know that this privilege of perseverance belongs to the whole family of God,—to the youngest as well as the oldest,—to the weakest as well as the strongest,—to the babes in grace as well as to the old pillars of the Church. The least faith shall as certainly continue indestructible as the greatest. The least spark of grace shall prove as unquenchable as the most burning and shining light. Your faith may be very feeble, your grace may be very weak, your strength may be very small, you may feel that in spiritual things you are but a child. Yet fear not, neither be afraid. It is not on the quantity of a man's grace, but on the truth and genuineness of it, that the promise turns. A farthing is as truly a current coin of the realm as a golden sovereign, though it is not so valuable. Wherever sin is truly repented of, and Christ is truly trusted, and holiness is truly followed, there is a work that shall never be overthrown. It shall stand, when the earth and all the works thereof shall be burned up.

Reader, there are yet some things to be said about perseverance, to which I must request your special attention. Without them the account of the doctrine would be imperfect and incomplete. The mention of them may clear up some of the difficulties which surround the subject, and throw light on some points of Christian experience, which God's children find hard to understand.

Remember then, that when I tell you believers shall

persevere to the end, *I do not for a moment say that they shall never fall into sin.* They may fall sadly, foully and shamefully, to the scandal of true religion, to the injury of their families, to their own deep and bitter sorrow. Noah once fell into drunkenness. Abraham twice said falsely that Sarah was only his sister. Jacob deceived his father Isaac. Moses spoke unadvisedly with his lips. David committed horrible adultery. Solomon lost his first love, and was led away by his many wives. Hezekiah forgot God, and boasted of his riches. Peter denied his Lord three times with an oath. The apostles all forsook Christ in the garden. All these are cases in point. They are all melancholy proofs that Christians may fall. But believers shall never fall *totally, finally, and completely.* They shall always rise again from their falls by repentance, and renew their walk with God. Though sorely humbled and cast down, they never entirely lose their grace. The *comfort* of it they may lose, but not the *being.* Like the moon under an eclipse, their light is for a season turned into darkness, but they are not rejected and cast away. Like the trees in winter, they may show neither leaves nor fruit for a time, but the life is still in their roots. They may be overtaken by a fault, and carried away by temptation. But they never perish.

Remember for another thing, that when I say believers shall persevere to the end, *I do not mean that they shall have no doubts and fears about their own safety.* So far from this being the case, the holiest men of God are sometimes sorely troubled by anxieties about their

own spiritual condition. They see so much weakness in their own hearts, and find their practice come so short of their desires, that they are strongly tempted to doubt the reality of their own grace, and to fancy they are but hypocrites, and shall never reach heaven at all. To *be safe* is one thing: to *feel sure* that we are safe is quite another. There are many true believers who never enjoy the full assurance of hope all their days. Their faith is so weak, and their sense of sin so strong, that they never feel confident of their own interest in Christ. Many a time they could say with David, "I shall one day perish," (1 Sam. xxvii. 1.) and with Job, "where is my hope?" (Job xvii. 15.) The joy and peace in believing, which some feel, and the witness of the Spirit which some experience, are things which many believers, whose faith it is impossible to deny, never appear to attain. Called as they evidently are by the grace of God, they never seem to taste the full comfort of their calling. But still they are perfectly safe, though they themselves refuse to know it.

"More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in heaven."

The full assurance of hope is not necessary to salvation. The absence of it is no argument against a man's perseverance to the end. That mighty master of theology, John Bunyan, knew well what he wrote, when he told us that Despondency and Much-afraid got safe to the Celestial City at last, as well as Mr. Valiant-for-the-truth. It is as true of the most doubting child of God, as it is

of the strongest, that he shall "never perish." He may never feel it. But it is true.*

Remember in the last place, that the certain perseverance of believers *does not free them from the necessity of watching, praying, and using means, or make it needless to ply them with practical exhortations.* So far from this being the case, it is just by the use of means that God enables them to continue in the faith. He draws them with "the cords of a man." He uses warnings and conditional promises, as part of the machinery by which He insures their final safety. The very fact that they despised the helps and ordinances which God has appointed, would be a plain proof that they had no grace at all, and were on the road to destruction. St. Paul before his shipwreck had a special revelation from God, that he and all the ship's company should get safe to land. But it is a striking fact that he said to the soldiers, "except the seamen abide in the ship ye cannot be saved." (Acts xxvii. 31.) He knew that *the end* was insured, but believed also that it was an end to be reached by the use of certain *means*. The cautions, and conditional promises, and admonitions to believers, with which Scripture abounds, are all a part of the divine agency by which their perseverance is effected. An old writer says "they do not imply that the saints can fall away: but they are preservatives to keep them from falling away." The man that thinks he can do without

* "Every believer doth not know that he is a believer, and therefore, he cannot know all the privileges that belong to believers."—*The Will*. 1690.

such cautions, and despises them as legal, may well be suspected as an impostor, whose heart has never yet been renewed. The man who has been really taught by the Spirit will generally have a humble sense of his own weakness, and be thankful for anything which can quicken his conscience and keep him on his guard. They that persevere to the end are not dependent on any means, but still they are not independent of them. Their final salvation does not hang on their obedience to practical exhortations, but it is just in taking heed to such exhortations that they will always continue to the end. It is the diligent, the watchful, the prayerful and the humble, to whom belongs the promise "they shall never perish."

Reader, I have now given you an account of what I mean, when I speak of the doctrine of perseverance. This, and this only, is the doctrine that I am prepared to defend in this tract. I ask you to weigh well what I have said, and to examine the statement I have made on every side. I believe it will stand inspection.

It will not do to tell us that this doctrine of perseverance has any *tendency to encourage careless and ungodly living*. Such a charge is utterly destitute of truth. It cannot justly be brought forward. I have not a word to say in behalf of any one who lives in wilful sin, however high his profession may be. He is deceiving himself. He has a lie in his hand. He has none of the marks of God's elect. The perseverance I plead for is not that of sinners, but of saints. It is not a perseverance in carnal and ungodly ways, but a perseverance in the way of faith and grace. Show me a man that

deliberately lives an unholy life, and yet boasts that he is converted and shall never perish, and I say plainly, that I see nothing hopeful about him. He may know all mysteries, and speak with the tongue of angels, but, so long as his life is unaltered, he appears to me in the high road to hell.*

It will not do to tell us that this doctrine of perseverance, *is merely a piece of Calvinism*. Nothing is easier than to get up a prejudice against a truth, by giving it a bad name. Men deal with doctrines they do not like, as Nero did when he persecuted the early Christians. They dress them up in a hideous garment, and then hold them up to scorn and run them down. The perseverance of the saints is often treated in this manner. People stave it off by some sneering remark about "Calvinism," or by some apocryphal old wives' fable about "Oliver Cromwell's death-bed," and think they have settled the question.† Surely it would be more becoming to enquire whether perseverance was not

* "Let none encourage themselves to a freedom in sin, and presume upon God's preservation of them without the use of means. No! The electing counsel upon which this victory is founded, chose us to the means as well as to the end. He that makes such a consequence, I doubt whether he ever was a Christian. I may safely say that any person that hath settled, resolved, and wilful remissness, never yet was in the covenant of grace."—*Charnock on Weak Grace*. 1684.

† I allude to the common story that Cromwell on his death-bed asked Dr. Thomas Goodwin whether a believer could fall from grace. Goodwin replied that he could not. Cromwell is reported to have said, that "if so he was safe, for he was sure that he had once been in a state of grace."

The truth of this story is exceedingly questionable. It is a remarkable fact that Cromwell's faithful servant, who published a

taught in the Bible 1400 years before Calvin was born. The question to be decided is not whether the doctrine is Calvinistic, but whether it is scriptural. The words of Bishop Horsley deserve to be widely known. "Take special care," he says, "before you aim your shafts at Calvinism, that you know what is Calvinism and what is not;—that in the mass of doctrine which it is of late become the fashion to abuse under the name Calvinism, you can distinguish with certainty, between that part of it which is nothing better than Calvinism, and that which belongs to our common Christianity and the general faith of the reformed Churches;—lest, when you mean only to fall foul of Calvinism you should unwarily attack something more sacred and of a higher origin."

Last, but not least, it will not do to tell us *that perseverance is not the doctrine of the Church of England*. Whatever men may please to say against it, this is an assertion at any rate, which they will find it hard to prove. Perseverance is taught in the seventeenth article of the Church of England, clearly, plainly, unmis-takeably. It was the doctrine of the first five Arch-bishops of Canterbury, Parker, Grindal, Whitgift, Bancroft, and Abbott. It was the doctrine preached by the judicious Hooker, as any one may see by reading his

collection of all the remarkable sayings and doings of his master in his last sickness, does not mention this conversation. It is more than probable that it is one of those false and malicious inventions with which the great Protector's enemies laboured so hard to blacken his memory after his death.

sermons.* It was the doctrine which all the leading divines of the Church of England maintained till the reign of Charles the First. The denial of the doctrine up to this time was hardly tolerated. More than one minister who called it in question was compelled to read a public recantation before the University of Cambridge. In short, till the time when Archbishop Laud came into power, perseverance was regarded in the Church of England as an acknowledged truth of the Gospel. Together with the Popish leaven which Laud brought with him, there came the unhappy doctrine that true believers may fall away and perish. This is simple matter of history. The perseverance of the saints is the old doctrine of the Church of England. The denial of it is the new.†

Reader, I feel that it is time to leave this branch of the subject and pass on. I want no clearer and more

* "As Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more power over Him; so the justified man being allied to God in Christ Jesus our Lord doth as necessarily from that time forward always live, as Christ by whom he hath life liveth always." (Rom. vi. 10. John xiv. 19.)

"As long as that abideth in us which animateth, quickeneth, and giveth life, so long we live; and we know that the cause of our faith abideth in us for ever. If Christ the fountain of life may flit, and leave the habitation where once he dwelleth, what shall become of his promise, 'I am with you to the world's end?' If the seed of God which containeth Christ may be first conceived and then cast out, how doth St. Peter term it immortal? (1 Peter i. 23.) How doth St. John affirm that it abideth?" (1 John iii. 9).—*Hooker's Discourse of Justification*. 1690.

† Those readers who wish to know more on this subject, are referred to a note which they will find at the end of this tract.

distinct statement of perseverance than that contained in the seventeenth article of my own church, to which I have already referred. That article says of God's elect; "they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by His Spirit working in due season: they through grace obey His calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length by God's mercy, *they attain to everlasting felicity.*" These are precisely the views which I maintain. This is the doctrine which I long ago subscribed. This is the truth which I believe it is my duty, as a clergyman, to defend. This is the truth which I now want you to receive and believe.*

II. I now proceed *to show the scriptural grounds on which the doctrine of perseverance is built.*

I need hardly say that the Bible is the only test by which the truth of every religious doctrine can be tried. The words of the sixth article of the Church of England deserve to be written in letters of gold, "whatsoever is not read in the Holy Scripture, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith." By that rule I

* "I would entreat any man that hath his eyes set right in his head, to read and consider the words of the seventeenth article, the order and soundness of them; and then let him judge whether perseverance unto the end be not soundly and roundly set down and averred in this article."—*George Carleton, Bishop of Chichester, 1626. An Examination, p. 63.*

am content to abide. I ask no man to believe the final perseverance of the saints, unless the doctrine can be proved to be that of the word of God. One plain verse of Scripture, to my mind, outweighs the most logical conclusions to which human reason can attain.

Reader, in bringing forward those texts of scripture on which this tract is founded, I purposely abstain from quoting from the Old Testament. I do so, lest any should say that the Old Testament promises belong exclusively to the Jewish people as a nation, and are not available in a disputed question affecting individual believers. I do not admit the soundness of this argument, but I will not give any one the chance of using it. I find proofs in abundance in the New Testament, and to them I shall confine myself.

I shall write down the texts which appear to me to prove final perseverance, without note or comment. I will only ask you to observe, as you read them, how deep and broad is the foundation on which the doctrine rests. Observe, that it is not for any strength or goodness of their own that the saints shall continue to the end, and never fall away. They are in themselves weak, and frail, and liable to fall like others. Their safety is based on the promise of God which was never yet broken,—on the election of God which cannot be in vain,—on the power of the great mediator Christ Jesus which is Almighty,—on the inward work of the Holy Ghost, which cannot be overthrown. I ask you to read the following texts carefully, and see whether it is not so.

“I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall *never*

perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

"My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (John x. 28, 29.)

"Who shall *separate us* from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

"As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

"Nay in all these things we are *more than conquerors* through him that loved us.

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

"Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, *shall be able to separate us* from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 35, 39.)

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have *continued* with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." (1 John ii. 19.)

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and *shall not come into condemnation*; but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.)

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall *live for ever*." (John vi. 51.)

"Because I live, ye *shall live* also." (John xiv. 19.)

"Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." (John xi. 26.)

"By one offering he hath *perfected for ever* them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 14.)

"He that doeth the will of God *abideth for ever*." (1 John ii. 17.)

"Sin shall *not have dominion* over you." (Rom. vi. 14.)

"The very hairs of your head are all numbered." (Matt. x. 30.)

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench." (Matt. xii. 20.)

"Who shall also *confirm you to the end*, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. i. 8.)

"*Kept* by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter i. 5.)

"*Preserved* in Jesus Christ, and called." (Jude. 1.)

"The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and *will persevere* me unto His heavenly kingdom." (2 Tim. iv. 18.)

"I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Faithful is he that calleth you, who also *will do it*." (1 Thess. v. 23, 24.)

"The Lord is faithful, who *shall stablish* you, and keep you from evil." (2 Thess. iii. 3.)

"God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the

temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. x. 13.)

"God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath ;

"That by two immutable things, in which it was *impossible for God to lie*, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." (Heb. vi. 17, 18.)

"Fear not, little flock ; for it is your *Father's good pleasure* to give you the kingdom." (Luke xii. 32.)

"This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should *lose nothing*, but should raise it up again at the last day." (John vi. 39.)

"The foundation of God *standeth sure*, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His." (2 Tim. ii. 19.)

"Whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, *them he also glorified*." (Rom. viii. 30.)

"God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. v. 9.)

"God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." (2 Thess. ii. 13.)

"The vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." (Rom. ix. 23.)

"The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." (Rom. xi. 29.)

"If it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." (Matt. xxiv. 24.)

"He is able to *save to the uttermost* all them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. vii. 25.)

"Able to *keep you from falling*, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." (Jude 24.)

"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." (2 Tim. i. 12.)

"I have prayed for thee, that thy *faith fail not*." (Luke xxii. 32.)

"Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me." (John xvii. 11.)

"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." (John xvii. 15.)

"I will that they also whom thou hast given me, *be with me* where I am." (John xvii. 24.)

"If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son ; much more, being reconciled, we *shall be saved* by His life." (Rom. v. 10.)

"The Spirit of truth ; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him ; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and *shall be in you*." (John xiv. 17.)

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, *will perform it* until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. i. 6.)

"The anointing which ye have received of Him

abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye *shall abide* in Him." (1 John ii. 27.)

"The Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are *sealed* unto the day of redemption." (Ephes. iv. 30.)

"Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." (Ephes. i. 13, 14.)

"Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of *incorruptible*." (1 Peter. i. 23.)

"He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." (Heb. xiii. 5.)

Reader, I lay before you these forty-four texts of Scripture, and ask your serious attention to them. I repeat that I will make no comment on them. I had rather leave them to the honest common sense of all who read the Bible. Some of these texts no doubt, bring out the doctrine of final perseverance more clearly than others. About the interpretation of some of them, men's judgments may differ widely. But there are not a few of the forty-four which appear to my mind so plain, that were I to invent words to confirm my views, I should despair of inventing any that would convey my meaning so unmistakeably.

I am far from saying that these texts are all the Scriptural evidence that might be brought forward. I am satisfied that the doctrine maintained in this tract might be confirmed by other arguments of great might and power.

I might point to the *attributes of God's character revealed in the Bible*, and show how His wisdom,

unchangeableness, and power, and love, and glory, are all involved in the perseverance of the saints. If the elect may finally perish, what becomes of God's counsel about them in eternity, and His doings for them in time? *

I might point to all *the offices which the Lord Jesus fills*, and show what discredit is thrown on His discharge of them, if any of His believing people can finally be lost. What kind of Head would He be, if any of the members of His mystical body could be torn from Him?—What kind of Shepherd would He be, if a single sheep of His flock was left behind in the wilderness?—What kind of Physician would He be, if any patient under His hand were at length found incurable?—What kind of High Priest would He be, if any name once written on His heart were found wanting when He makes up His jewels?—What kind of Husband would He be, if He and any soul once united to Him by faith were ever put asunder? †

* "Now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations, which have heard the fame of thee, will speak, saying,

"Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness."—Numbers xiv. 15. 16.

"What wilt thou do to thy great name?"—Joshua vii. 9.

"If any of the elect perish, God is overcome by man's perverseness: but none of them perish, because God who is omnipotent can by no means be overcome."—*Augustine. De Corruptione et Gratia. Cap. VII.*

† "How well do they consult for Christ's honour that say his sheep may die in a ditch of final apostasy?

"Christ and His members make one Christ. Now, is it possible a piece of Christ can be found at last burning in hell? Can Christ be a crippled Christ? Can this member drop off and that? How can Christ part with His mystical members and not with His glory?"—*Gurnall. 1655.*

Finally, I might point to the great fact that there is *not a single example in all Scripture of any one of God's elect ever finally making shipwreck, and going to hell.* We read of false prophets and hypocrites. We read of fruitless branches, stony ground and thorny ground hearers, virgins without oil in their vessels, servants who bury their talents. We read of Balaam, and Lot's wife, and Saul, and Judas Iscariot, and Ananias and Sapphira, and Demas. We see their hollow characters. We are told of their end. They have no root. They are rotten at the heart. They endure for a while. They go at last to their own place. But there is not a single instance in the whole Bible of any one falling away, who ever shewed unquestionable evidences of grace. Men like Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Peter, and Paul always hold on their way. They may slip. They may fall for a season. But they never entirely depart from God. They "never perish." Surely if the saints of God can be cast away, it is a curious and striking fact, that the Bible should not have given us one single plain example of it.

But time and space would fail me, if I were to enter into the field which I have just pointed out. I think it better to rest my case on the texts which I have already given. The mind to which these texts carry no conviction, is not likely to be influenced by other arguments. To myself they appear, when taken altogether, to contain such an immense mass of evidence, that I dare not, as a Christian man, deny perseverance to be true. I dare not, because I feel at this rate I might dispute the truth of any doctrine in the Gospel. I feel that if I could

explain away such plain texts as some of those I have quoted, I could explain away almost all the leading truths of Christianity.

I am quite aware that there are some texts and passages of Scripture, which appear at first sight to teach a contrary doctrine to that which I maintain in this tract. I know that many attach great weight to these texts, and consider them to prove that the saints of God may perish and fall away. I can only say that I have examined these texts with attention, but have found in them no reason to alter my opinion on the subject of perseverance.* The number is small. Their meaning

* The following texts, on which the opponents of perseverance principally rely, appear to call for a brief notice.

Ezek. iii. 20. and Ezek. xviii. 24. I can see no proof in either of these cases that "the righteous" here spoken of, is anything more than one, whose outward conduct is righteous. There is nothing to show that he is one justified by faith and accounted righteous before God.

1 Cor. ix. 27. I see nothing in this but the godly fear of falling into sin, which is one of the marks of a believer and distinguishes him from the unconverted, and a simple declaration of the means which Paul used to preserve himself from being a cast-away. It is like 1 John v. 18. "he that is begotten of God *keepeth himself*."

John xv. 2. This does not prove that true believers shall be taken away from Christ. A branch that "*does not bear fruit*" is not a believer. "A lively faith," says the 12th Article, "may be as evidently known by good works, as a tree is known by the fruit."

1 Thess. v. 19. If "the Spirit" here means the Spirit in ourselves, it means no more than "grieving the Spirit" in Ephes. iv. 30. But many think it is the Spirit's gifts in others, and ought to be taken in connection with verse 20.

is unquestionably more open to dispute than that of many of the forty-four I have quoted. They all of them admit of being interpreted so as not to contradict the doctrine of perseverance. I hold it to be an infallible rule in the exposition of Scripture, that when two texts seem to contradict one another, the less plain must give way to the more plain, and the weak must give way to the strong. That doctrine which reconciles most texts of Scripture is most likely to be right. That

Gal. v. 4. The tenor of the whole Epistle seems to show that this "falling" is not from the inward grace of the Spirit, but from the doctrine of grace. The same remark applies to 2 Cor. vi. 1.

Heb. vi. 4—6. The person here described as "falling away" has no characteristics which may not be discovered in unconverted men, while it is not said that he possesses saving faith, and charity, and is elect.

John viii. 31. Coloss. i. 23. The conditional "if" in both these verses and several others like them that might be quoted, does not imply an uncertainty as to the salvation of those described. It simply means that the evidence of real grace is "continuance." False grace perishes. True grace lasts. "It is frequent in Scripture," says Charnock, "to put into promises these conditions which in other places are promised to be wrought in us."—*Charnock on Real Grace*. 1684.

I readily grant that these are not all the texts that the adversaries of final perseverance generally bring forward. But I believe they are the principal ones. The weak point in their case is this. They have no text to prove that saints may fall away, which will at all compare with such an expression as "*my sheep shall never perish*," and they have no account to give of such a mighty saying as this promise of our Lord, which is at all satisfactory or even rational. John Goodwin, the famous Arminian, offers the following explanation of this text: "The promise of eternal safety made by Christ to His sheep, doth not relate to their estate in the present world, but to that of the world to come!" A man must be sorely put to straits when he can argue in such a way.

doctrine which makes most texts quarrel with one another is most likely to be wrong.

I ask you, if not convinced by all I have said hitherto, to put down the texts I have quoted on behalf of perseverance, and the texts commonly quoted against it, in two separate lists. Weigh them one against another. Judge them with fair and honest judgment. Which list contains the greatest number of positive, unmis-takeable assertions? Which list contains the greatest number of sentences which cannot be explained away?—Which list is the strongest? Which list is the weakest?—Which list is the most flexible? Which list is the most unbending?—If it were possible in a world like this to have this question fairly tried by an unprejudiced, intelligent jury, I have not the least doubt which way the verdict would go. It is my own firm belief and conviction that the final perseverance of the saints is so deeply founded on Scriptural grounds, that, so long as the Bible is the Judge, it cannot be overthrown.

III. The third thing I propose to do, is to *point out the reasons why many reject the doctrine of perseverance.*

It is impossible to deny that multitudes of professing Christians entirely disagree with the views expressed in this tract. I am quite aware that many regard them with abhorrence, as dangerous, enthusiastic, and fanatical, and lose no opportunity of warning people against them. I am also aware that among those who hold that the saints of God may fall away and perish, are to be found many holy, self-denying, spiritually-minded persons,—persons at whose feet I would gladly sit in

heaven, though I cannot approve of all their teaching upon earth.

This being the case, it becomes a matter of deep interest to find out, if we can, the reasons why the doctrine of perseverance is so often refused. How is it that a doctrine for which so much Scripture can be alleged, should be so stoutly opposed? How is it that a doctrine which for the first hundred years of the Reformed Church of England it was hardly allowable to call in question, should now be so frequently rejected? What new views can have risen up in the last two centuries, which make it necessary to discharge this good old servant of Christ? I am confident that such enquiries are of deep importance in the present day. There is far more in this question than appears at first sight. I am satisfied that I am not wasting time in endeavouring to throw a little light on the whole subject.

I desire to clear the way by conceding that many good persons refuse the doctrine of perseverance for no reason whatever excepting that *it is too strong for them*. There are vast numbers of true-hearted Christians just now, who never seem able to bear anything strong. Their religious constitution appears so feeble, and their spiritual digestion so weak, that they must always be "fed with milk and not with meat." Talk to them strongly about grace, and they put you down as an Antinomian! Talk strongly about holiness, and you are thought legal! Speak strongly of election, and you are considered a narrow-minded Calvinist! Speak strongly about responsibility and free agency, and you

are regarded as a low Arminian ! In short, they can bear nothing strong of any kind, or in any direction. Of course they cannot receive the doctrine of perseverance.

I leave these people alone. I am sorry for them. There are sadly too many of them in the Churches of Christ just now. I can only wish them better spiritual health, and less narrowness of views, and a quicker growth in spiritual knowledge. The persons I have in my mind's eye in this part of my tract are of a different class, and to them I now address myself.

1. I believe one reason why many do not hold perseverance, is *their general ignorance of the whole system of Christianity*. They have no clear idea of the nature, place, and proportion of the various doctrines which compose the Gospel. Its several truths have no definite position in their minds. Its general outline is not mapped out in their understandings. They have a vague notion that it is a right thing to belong to the Church of Christ, and to believe all the articles of the Christian faith. They have a floating misty idea that Christ has done certain things for them, and that they ought to do certain things for Him, and that if they do them it will be all right at last. But beyond this they really know nothing. Of the great systematic statements in the Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews, they are profoundly ignorant. As to a clear account of justification, you might as well ask them to square the circle or write a letter in Sanscrit. It is a subject they have not even touched with the

tips of their fingers. This is a sore disease, and only too common in England. Unhappily, it is the disease of thousands who pass muster as excellent churchmen. It is absurd to expect such people to hold perseverance. When a man does not know what it is to be *justified*, he cannot of course understand what it is to persevere to the end.

2. I believe another reason why many do not hold perseverance, is *their dislike to any system of religion which draws distinctions between man and man*. There are not a few who entirely disapprove of any Christian teaching which divides the congregation into different classes, and speaks of one class of people as being in a better and more favourable state before God than another. Such people cry out, "that all teaching of this kind is *uncharitable*, that we ought to hope well of everybody, and suppose everybody will go to heaven." They think it downright wrong to say that one man has faith and another has not, one is converted and another not, one a child of God and another a child of the world, one a saint and another a sinner. "What right have we to think anything about it?" they say. "We cannot possibly know. Those whom we call good, are very likely no better than others,—hypocrites, imposters, and the like. Those of whom we think badly are very probably quite as much in the way to heaven as the rest of mankind, and have got good hearts at the bottom." As to any one feeling sure of heaven, or confident of his own salvation, they consider it quite abominable. "No man can be sure. We ought to

hope well of all." There are only too many people of this sort in the present day. Of course the doctrine of perseverance is perfectly intolerable to them. When a man refuses to allow that any one is elect, or has grace, or enjoys any special mark of God's favour more than his neighbours, it stands to reason that he will deny that any one can have the grace of perseverance.

3. I believe another common reason why many do not hold perseverance, is *an incorrect view of the nature of saving faith*. They regard faith as nothing better than a feeling or impression. As soon as they see a man somewhat impressed with the preaching of the Gospel, and manifesting some pleasure in hearing about Christ, they set him down at once as a believer. By and bye the man's impressions wear away, and his interest about Christ and salvation ceases altogether. Where is the faith he seemed to have? It is gone. How can his friends, who had pronounced him a believer, account for it? They can only account for it by saying, "that a man may fall away from faith, and that there is no such thing as perseverance." And in short, this becomes an established principle in their religion. Now this is a mischievous error, and I am afraid sadly common in many quarters. It manifestly may be traced to ignorance of the true nature of religious affections. People forget that there may be many religious emotions in the human mind with which the Holy Spirit has nothing to do. The stony ground hearers received the word with joy, but had no root in them. The history of all revivals proves that there may often be a great

quantity of seemingly religious impression without any true work of the Spirit. Saving faith is something far deeper and mightier than a little sudden feeling. It is an act not of the feelings only but of the whole conscience, will, understanding, and inward man. It is the result of clear knowledge. It springs from a conscience not grazed merely but thoroughly stirred. It shows itself in a deliberate, willing, humble dependence on Christ. Such faith is the gift of God, and is never overthrown. Make faith a mere matter of feeling, and it is of course impossible to maintain perseverance.

4. I believe another reason why many do not hold perseverance is near akin to the one last mentioned. It is *an incorrect view of the nature of conversion*. Not a few are ready to pronounce any change for the better in a man's character a conversion. They forget that there may be many blossoms on a tree in spring, and yet no fruit in autumn, and that a new coat of paint does not make an old door new. Some, if they see any one weeping under the influence of a sermon, will set it down at once as a case of conversion. Others, if a neighbour suddenly gives up drinking or swearing, and becomes a communicant and a great professor, at once rush to the conclusion that he is converted. The natural consequence, in numerous instances, is disappointment. Their supposed case of conversion, often turns out nothing more than a case of outward reform, in which the heart was never changed. Their converted neighbour sometimes returns to his old bad habits, as the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

But then unhappily the pride of the natural heart, which never likes to allow itself mistaken, induces people to form a wrong conclusion about the case. Instead of telling us that the man never was converted at all, they say "that he was converted, but afterwards lost his grace and fell away." The true remedy for this is a right understanding of conversion. It is no such cheap and easy and common thing as many seem to fancy. It is a mighty work on the heart, which none but He who made the world can effect, and a work which will abide and stand the fire. But once take a low and superficial view of conversion, and you will find it impossible to maintain final perseverance.

5. I believe another most common reason why many do not hold perseverance is *an incorrect view of the effect of baptism*. They lay it down as a cardinal point in their divinity, that all who are baptized are born again in baptism, and all receive the grace of the Holy Ghost. Without a single plain text in the Bible to support their opinions, and in the face of the 17th Article, which many of them as Churchmen have subscribed, they still tell us that all baptized persons are necessarily regenerate. Of course such a view of baptism is utterly destructive of the doctrine that true grace can never be overthrown. It is plain as daylight, that multitudes of baptized persons never show a spark of grace all their lives, and never give the slightest evidence of having been born of God. They live careless and worldly, and careless and worldly they die, and to all appearance miserably perish. According to the view

to which I am now referring, "they have all fallen away from grace! They all had it! They were all made God's children! But they all lost their grace! They have all become children of the devil!" I will not trust myself to make a single remark on such doctrine. I leave those who can to reconcile it with the Bible. All I say is that if baptismal regeneration be true, there is an end of final perseverance.

6. I believe another reason why many do not hold perseverance, is *an incorrect view of the nature of the Church*. They make no distinction between the visible Church which contains "evil as well as good," and the invisible Church which is composed of none but God's elect and true believers. They apply to the one the privileges, and blessings, and promises which belong to the other. They call the visible Church, with its crowds of ungodly members, and baptized infidels, "the mystical body of Christ, the Bride, the Lamb's wife, the Holy Catholic Church," and the like. They will not see, what Hooker long ago pointed out, and his admirers would do well to remember, that all these glorious titles do not properly belong to any visible Church, but to the mystical company of God's elect. The consequence of all this confusion is certain and plain. Upon this man-made system they are obliged to allow that thousands of members of Christ's body have no life, no grace, and no sympathy with their Head, and end at last by being ruined for ever, and becoming lost members of Christ in hell! Of course at this rate they cannot maintain the doctrine of perseverance.

Once embrace the unscriptural notion that all members of the visible Church are, by virtue of their churchmanship, members of Christ, and the doctrine of this tract must be thrown aside. Oh! what a wise remark it is of Hooker's, "For want of diligent observing the difference between the Church of God mystical and visible,—the oversights are neither few nor light that have been committed."

Reader, I commend the things I have just been saying to your sincere and prayerful attention. I have gone through them at the risk of seeming wearisome, from a deep conviction of their great importance. I am sure if any part of this tract deserves consideration, it is this.

I intreat you to observe how important it is for Christians to be *sound in the faith*, and to be armed with clear Scriptural knowledge of the whole system of the Gospel. I fear the increasing tendency to regard all doctrinal questions as matters of opinion, and to look on all "earnest-minded" men as right, whatever doctrines they maintain. I warn you that the sure result of giving way to this tendency, will be a vague, low, misty theology,—a theology containing no positive hope, no positive motive, and no positive consolation,—a theology which will fail most, just when it is most wanted, in the day of affliction, the hour of sickness, and on the bed of death.

I know well that it is a thankless office to offer such warnings as these. I know well that those who give them must expect to be called bigotted, narrow-minded, and exclusive. But I cannot review the many errors

which prevail on the subject of perseverance, without seeing more than ever the immense need there is for urging on all to be careful about *doctrines*. Oh! learn to know what you mean, when you talk of believing the doctrines of Christianity. Be able to give a reason of your hope. Be able to say what you think true, and what you think false in religion. And never, never forget that the only foundation of soundness in the faith, is a thorough textual knowledge of the Bible.

I entreat you for another thing, to observe how *one error in religion leads on to another*. There is a close connection between false doctrines. It is almost impossible to take up one alone. Once let a man get wrong about the Church and the sacraments, and there is no saying how far he may go, and where he may land at last. It is a mistake at the fountain-head, and influences the whole course of his religion. The mistake about baptism is a striking illustration of what I mean. It throws a colour over the whole of a man's divinity. It insensibly affects his views of justification, sanctification, election, and perseverance. It fills his mind with a tangled maze of confusion as to all the leading articles of the faith. He starts with a theory for which no single plain text of Scripture can be alleged, and before this theory tramples down plain passages of the Bible by the score! They interfere, forsooth, with his favourite theory, and therefore cannot mean what common sense tells us they do! Oh! reader, be as jealous about a little false doctrine, as you would be about a little sin. Remember the words of St. Paul, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

IV. I now proceed, in the last place, to mention *some reasons why the doctrine of final perseverance is of great importance.*

When I speak of the importance of perseverance, I do not for a moment mean that it is necessary to salvation to receive it. I freely grant that thousands and tens of thousands have gone to heaven, who believed all their lives that saints might fall away. But all this does not prove the doctrine maintained in this tract to be a matter of indifference. He that does not believe it and yet is saved, no doubt does well. But I am persuaded that he that believes it and is saved, does far better. I hold it to be one of the chief privileges of the children of God, and I consider that no privilege contained in the Gospel can be lost sight of without injury to the soul.

1. Perseverance is a doctrine of great importance, because of *the strong colour which it throws on the whole statement of the Gospel.*

The grand characteristic of the Gospel is that it is glad tidings. It is a message of peace to a rebellious world. It is good news from a far country, alike unexpected and undeserved. It is the glad tidings that there is a hope for us, lost, ruined, and bankrupt as we are by nature,—a hope of pardon, a hope of reconciliation with God, a hope of glory. It is the glad tidings that the foundation of this hope is mighty, deep, and broad; that it is built on the atoning death and gracious mediation of a Saviour. It is the glad tidings that this Saviour is an actual living person, Jesus the Son of

God, able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him, and no less merciful, compassionate, and ready to save than able. It is the glad tidings that the way to pardon and peace by this Saviour is the simplest possible,—it is not a thing high in heaven that we cannot reach, or deep in the depths that we cannot fathom,—it is simply to believe, to trust, and to cast ourselves wholly on Jesus for salvation,—and salvation is all our own. It is the glad tidings that all who believe are at once justified and forgiven all things; their sins, however many, are washed away; their souls, however unworthy, are counted righteous before God. They believe on Jesus, and therefore they are saved. This is the good news. This is the glad tidings. This is the truth which is the grand peculiarity of the Gospel. Happy indeed is he that knows and believes it!

But think, reader, for a moment, what a mighty difference it would make in the sound of the Gospel, if I went on to tell you that, after receiving all these mercies, you might by and bye lose them entirely. What would your feelings be, if I told you that you were in daily peril of forfeiting all these privileges, and having your pardon sealed in Christ's blood taken back again? What would you think, if I told you that your safety was yet an uncertain thing, and that you might yet perish and never reach heaven at all? Oh! what a falling off this would seem! Oh! how much of the grace and beauty of the glorious Gospel would disappear and fade away! Yet this is literally and exactly the conclusion to which a denial of perseverance *must* bring us.

Once admit that the saints of God may perish, and you seem to me to tear from the Gospel crown its brightest jewel. We are hanging on the edge of a precipice. We are kept in awful suspense until we are dead. To tell us that there are plenty of gracious promises to encourage us, if we will only persevere, is but mockery. It is like telling the sick man that if he will only get well he will be strong. The poor patient feels no confidence that he will get well, and the poor weak believer feels nothing in him like power to persevere. To-day he may be in Canaan, and to-morrow he may be in Egypt again and in bondage! This week he may be in the narrow way; but, for anything he knows, next week he may be back in the broad road! This month he may be a justified, pardoned, and forgiven man; but next month his pardon may be all revoked, and he himself in a state of condemnation! This year he may have faith, and be a child of God; next year he may be a child of the devil, and have no part or lot in Christ! Where is the good news in all this? What becomes of the glad tidings? Verily such doctrine seems to me to cut up the joy of the Gospel by the roots. Yet this is the doctrine we *must* hold, if we reject the final perseverance of the saints.*

I bless God that I am able to see another kind of Gospel than this in the Word of God. To my eyes the Bible seems to teach that he who once begins the life of faith in Christ, shall without doubt be preserved from

* "They weaken Christians' comfort that make believers walk with Christ, like dancers upon a rope every moment in fear of breaking their necks."—*Manton on Jude*. 1658.

apostacy, and come to a glorious end. Once made alive by the grace of God, he shall live for ever. Once raised from the grave of sin and made a new man, he shall never go back to the grave, and become once more the old man dead in trespasses and sins. He shall be kept by the power of God. He shall be more than conqueror through Him that loved him. The eternal God is his refuge; underneath him are the everlasting arms. The love in which he is interested is eternal. The righteousness in which he is clothed is eternal. The redemption which he enjoys is eternal. The *sense and comfort* of it he may lose by his own carelessness. But *the thing itself*, after once believing, is his for evermore.

Reader, look at the two ways in which the weary and heavy-laden sinner may be addressed, and judge for yourself which is most like the Gospel of the grace of God. On the one side stands the doctrine which says "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Once believing, thou shalt never perish. Thy faith shall never be allowed entirely to fail. Thou shalt be sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption." On the other side stands the doctrine which says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. But after thou hast believed, take care. Thy faith may fail. Thou mayest fall away. Thou mayest drive the Spirit from thee. Thou mayest at length perish everlastingly." Which doctrine of these two contains most good news? Which is most like glad tidings? Is it all the same which way the sinner is addressed? Is it matter of indifference whether we tell him that believing he is saved, *unless he falls*

away, or whether we tell him that believing he is saved *for ever* ! I cannot think it. I regard the difference between the two doctrines as very great indeed. It is the difference between January and June. It is the difference between twilight and noon day.

I speak for myself. I cannot answer for the experience of others. To give me solid peace, I must know something about my *future prospects* as well as about my *present position*. It is pleasant to see my pardon to-day. But I cannot help thinking of to-morrow. Tell me that he who leads me to Christ and gives me repentance and faith in Him, will never leave me nor forsake me, and I feel solid comfort.—My feet are on a rock.—My soul is in safe hands.—I shall get safe home. Tell me on the other hand, that after being led to Christ I am left to my own vigilance, and that it depends on my watching, and praying, and care, whether the Spirit leaves me or no,—and my heart melts within me. I stand on a quicksand. I lean on a broken reed. I shall never get to heaven. It is vain to tell me of the promises; they are only mine if I walk worthy of them. It is vain to talk to me of Christ's mercy; I may lose all my interest in it by indolence and self-will. Reader, the absence of the doctrine of perseverance appears to me to give a different colour to the whole Gospel of Christ. You cannot wonder if I regard it as of great importance.

2. But the doctrine of perseverance is also of importance, because of *the special influence it is calculated to have on all who halt between two opinions in religion*.

There are many persons of this description in the

Church of Christ. There are hundreds to be found in every congregation to which the Gospel of Christ is preached, who know well what is right, and yet have not courage to act up to their knowledge. Their consciences are awakened. Their minds are comparatively enlightened. Their feelings are partially aroused to a sense of the value of their souls. They see the path they ought to take. They hope one day to be able to take it. But at present they sit still and *wait*. They will not take up the cross and confess Christ.

And what is it that keeps them back? In a vast proportion of cases they are afraid to begin, lest they should by and bye fail and fall away. They see innumerable difficulties before them if they serve Christ. And we need not wonder. It is vain to deny that there are difficulties, both many and great. They stand shivering on the brink of the vast sea on which we would have them embark, and as they mark the rolling, tumbling waves, their hearts faint. They mark many a little boat on the waters of that sea, tossed to and fro, and struggling hard to make its way across, and looking as if it would be engulfed in the angry billows, and never get safe to harbour. "It is of no use," they feel: "it is of no use. We shall certainly fall away. We cannot serve Christ yet. The thing cannot be done."

Now what is most likely to give courage to these halting souls? What is most likely to hearten them for the voyage? What is most likely to cheer their spirits, nerve their minds, and bring them to the point of boldly launching away?—I answer without hesitation, the *doctrine of final perseverance*.

I would fain tell them that however great the difficulties of Christ's service, there is grace and strength in store to carry them triumphantly through all. I would tell them that these poor, praying, broken-spirited voyagers whom they watch and expect to see cast away, are all as safe as if they were already in harbour. They have each a pilot on board, who will carry them safe through every storm. They are each joined to the everlasting God by a tie that can never be broken, and shall all appear at length safe at the right hand of their Lord. Yes! and I would fain tell them, that they too shall all make a glorious end, if they will only begin. I would have them know, that if they will only commit themselves to Christ, they shall never be cast away. They shall not be plucked away by Satan. They shall never be left to sink and come to shame. Trials they may have, but none that the Spirit will not give them power to endure. Temptations they may have, but none that the Spirit shall not enable them to resist. Only let them begin, and they shall be conquerors. But the great matter is to begin.

Reader, I believe firmly that one reason why so many wavering Christians hang back from making a decided profession, is the want of encouragement which the doctrine of perseverance is intended to afford.

8. The doctrine of perseverance is of importance, because of *the special influence it is calculated to have on the minds of true believers.*

The number of true believers is at all times very small. They are a little flock. But even out of that

flock there are few who can be called strong in faith, few who know much of uninterrupted joy and peace in believing, few who are not often cast down by doubts, anxieties and fears.

It is useless to deny that the way to heaven is narrow. There are many things to try the faith of believers. They have trials the world cannot understand. They have within a heart weak, deceitful and not to be trusted,—cold when they would fain be warm,—backward when they would fain be forward,—more ready to sleep than to watch. They have without a world that does not love Christ's truth, and Christ's people,—a world full of slander, ridicule, and persecution,—a world with which their own dearest relations often join. They have ever near them a busy devil, an enemy who has been reading men's hearts for 6,000 years, and knows exactly how to suit and time his temptations,—an enemy who never ceases to lay snares in their way,—who never slumbers and never sleeps. They have the cares of life to attend to, like other people,—the cares of children,—the cares of business,—the cares of servants,—the cares of money,—the cares of earthly plans and arrangements,—the cares of a poor weak body, each daily thrusting itself upon their souls. Who can wonder that believers are sometimes cast down? Who ought not rather to marvel that any believers are saved? Truly I often think that the salvation of each saved person is a greater miracle than the passage of Israel through the Red Sea.*

* "There are as many miracles wrought as a saint is preserved minutes."—*Jenks on Jude*. 1680.

But what is the best antidote against the believer's fears and anxieties? What is most likely to cheer him, as he looks forward to the untried future and remembers the weary past? I answer without hesitation, the *doctrine of the final perseverance of God's elect*. Let him know that God having begun a good work in him will never allow it to be overthrown. Let him know that the footsteps of Christ's little flock are all in one direction. They have erred. They have been vexed. They have been tempted. But not one of them has been lost. Let him know that those whom Jesus loves, He loves unto the end. Let him know that He will not suffer the weakest lamb in His flock to perish in the wilderness, or the tenderest flower in His garden to wither and die. Let him know that Daniel in the den of lions, the three children in the fiery furnace, Paul in the shipwreck, Noah in the ark, were none of them more cared for and more secure than the believer in Christ. Let him know that he is fenced, walled, protected, guarded by the Almighty power of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and cannot perish. Let him know that it is not in the power of things present or things to come,—of men or of devils,—of cares within or troubles without, to separate one single child of God from the love that is in Christ Jesus.

This is strong consolation. These are the things which God has laid up in the Gospel for the establishment and confirmation of His people. Well would it be for His people, if these things were more brought forward than they are in the Church of Christ. Verily believe that one reason of the saints' weakness is

their ignorance of the truths which God has revealed in order to make them strong.

Reader, I leave the subject of the importance of perseverance here. I trust I have said enough to shew you that I have not called your attention to it in this tract without good cause. I feel strongly that the hardness of man's heart is such that nothing should be omitted in religious teaching which is likely to do it good. I dare not omit a single grain of truth, however strong and liable to abuse it may seem to be. Nothing appears to me of small importance which adds to the beauty of the Gospel, or gives encouragement to the halting, or confirms and builds up God's people. I desire to teach that the Gospel not only offers present pardon and peace, but eternal safety and certain continuance to the end. This I believe to be the mind of the Spirit. And what the Spirit reveals I desire to proclaim.

And now, reader, I have brought before you, to the best of my ability, the whole subject of perseverance. I have told you as plainly as I can, what I believe to be the truth as it is in Jesus. If I have offended you by anything I have said, I am sorry. I have no desire to pain any one, and least of all the children of God. If I have failed to convince you, I am sorry, but I am satisfied the defect is not in the doctrine I defend, but in my manner of stating it. It only remains to conclude this tract by a few words of practical application.

1. For one thing, let me entreat you to consider well, *whether you have any part at all in the salvation of Christ Jesus.*

It matters nothing what you believe about perseverance, if after all you have no faith in Christ. It matters little whether you hold the doctrine or not, so long as you have no saving faith, and your sins are not forgiven, and your heart not renewed by the Holy Ghost. The clearest head-knowledge will save no man. The most correct and orthodox views will not prevent a man perishing by the side of the most ignorant heathen, if he is not born again. Oh! search and see what is the state of your own soul.

You cannot live for ever. You must one day die. You cannot avoid the judgment after death. You must stand before the bar of Christ. The summons of the Archangel cannot be disobeyed. The last great assembly must be attended. The state of your own soul must one day undergo a thorough investigation. It will be found out one day what you are in God's sight. Your spiritual condition will at length be brought to light before the whole world. Oh! find out what it is now. While you have time, while you have health, find out the state of your soul.

Your danger, if you are not converted, is far greater than I can describe. Just in proportion to the thorough safety of the believer is the deadly peril of the unbeliever. There is but a step between the unbeliever and the worm that never dies, and the fire that is not quenched. He is literally hanging over the brink of the bottomless pit. Sudden death to the saint is sudden glory; but sudden death to the unconverted sinner, is sudden hell. Oh! search and see what is the state of your soul!

Remember that you may find out whether you have an interest in the invitations of the Gospel. It is a thing that may be known. It is nonsense to pretend that no man can tell. I never will believe that an honest man, with a Bible in his hand, will fail to discern his own spiritual condition by diligent self-examination. Oh ! be an honest man. Search the Scriptures. Look within. Rest not till you find out the state of your soul. To live on and leave the soul's state uncertain, is not to play the part of a wise man but of a fool.

2. In the next place, *if you know nothing of the privileges of the Gospel, I entreat you this day to repent and be converted, to hear Christ's voice, and follow Him.*

I know no reason human or divine, why you should not accept this invitation to-day and be saved, if you are really willing. It is not the quantity of your sins that need prevent you. All manner of sin may be forgiven. The blood of Jesus cleanseth away all sin.—It is not the hardness of your heart, that need prevent you. A new heart God will give you, and a new spirit will He put in you.—It is not the decrees of God that need prevent you. He willeth not the death of sinners. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.—It is not any want of willingness in Christ;—He has long cried to the sons of men, “Whosoever will let him take the water of life freely.” “Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” Oh! reader, why should not you be saved?

A day must come, if you are ever to be God's child, when you will cease to trifle with your soul's interests.

An hour must come when at last you will bend your knee in real earnestness, and pour out your heart before God in real prayer. A time must come when the burden of your sins will at last feel intolerable, and when you will feel you must have rest in Christ or perish. All this must be if you are ever to become a child of God and be saved. And why not to-day? Why not this very night? Why not without delay seek Christ and live? Oh! reader, answer me, if you can.

3. In the next place, *let me entreat every reader who holds final perseverance, so to use this precious doctrine as not to abuse it.*

There is an awful readiness in all men to abuse God's mercies. Even the children of God are not free from the sad infection. There is a busy devil near the best of saints, who would fain persuade them to make their privileges a plea for careless living, and to turn their soul's meat into poison. I cannot look round the church and see the end to which many high professors come, without feeling that there is need for a caution. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Would we know what it is to abuse the doctrine of perseverance? It is abused when believers make their safety an excuse for inconsistencies in practice. It is abused when they make their security from final ruin an apology for a low standard of sanctification, and a distant walk with God. Against both these abuses I entreat believers to be on their guard.

Would we know what it is to use the doctrine of perseverance aright? Let us watch jealously over the

daily workings of our own hearts. Let us mortify and nip in the bud the least inclination to spiritual indolence. Let us settle it down in our minds as a ruling principle of our lives, that the mercies of God are only turned to a good account when they have a *sanctifying effect on our hearts*. Let us root it firmly in our inward man, that the love of Christ is never so really valued as when it constrains us to increased spiritual mindedness. Let us set before our minds, that the more safe we feel the more holy we ought to be. The more we realize that God has done much for us, the more we ought to do for God. The greater our debt, the greater should be our gratitude. The more we see the riches of grace, the more rich should we be in good works.

Oh! for a heart like that of the Apostle Paul! To realize as he did, our perfect safety in Christ,—to labour as he did for God's glory, as if we could never do too much,—this is the mark,—this is the standard at which we ought to aim.

Reader, let us so use the doctrine of perseverance that our good may never be evil spoken of. Let us so adorn the doctrine by our lives that we may make it beautiful to others, and constrain men to say, "it is a good and holy thing to be persuaded that saints shall never perish."

4. In the last place, *I entreat all believers who have hitherto been afraid of falling away, to lay firm hold on the doctrine of perseverance, and to realize their own safety in Christ.*

I want you to know the length and breadth of your portion in Christ. I want you to understand the full

amount of the treasure to which faith in Jesus entitles you. You have found out that you are a great sinner. Thank God for that.—You have fled to Christ for pardon and peace with God. Thank God for that.—You have committed yourself to Jesus for time and eternity. You have no hope but in Christ's blood, Christ's righteousness, Christ's mediation, Christ's daily all-persevering intercession. Thank God for that.—Your heart's desire and prayer is to be holy in all manner of conversation. Thank God for that.—But oh ! lay hold upon the glorious truth, that believing on Jesus you shall never perish, you shall never be cast off, you shall never fall away. It is written for you as well as for the apostles, "my sheep shall never perish."

Yes ! reader, Jesus has spoken it, and Jesus meant it to be believed. Jesus has spoken it, who never broke His promises. Jesus has spoken it, who cannot lie. Jesus has spoken it, who has all power in heaven and earth to keep His word. Jesus has spoken it for the least and lowest believers, "my sheep shall never perish."

Wouldest thou have *perfect peace in life* ? Then lay hold on this doctrine of perseverance. Thy trials may be many and great. Thy cross may be very heavy. But the business of thy soul is all conducted according to an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. All things are working together for thy good. Thy sorrows are only purifying thy soul for glory. Thy bereavements are only fashioning thee as a polished stone for the temple above, made without hands. From whatever quarter the storms blow, they only drive thee nearer to heaven. Whatever weather thou mayest go

through, it is only ripening thee for the garner of God. Thy best things are quite safe. Come what will, thou shalt "never perish."

Wouldest thou have *strong consolation in sickness*? Then lay hold on this doctrine of perseverance. Think as thou feelest the pins of this earthly tabernacle loosening one by one, "nothing can break my union with Christ." Thy body may become useless. Thy members may refuse to perform their office. Thou mayest feel like an old useless log, a weariness to others, and a burden to thyself. But thy soul is safe. Jesus is never tired of caring for thy soul. Thou shalt "never perish."

Wouldest thou have *full assurance of hope in death*? Then lay hold on this doctrine of perseverance. Doctors may have given over their labours. Friends may be unable to minister to thy wants. Sight may depart. Hearing may depart. Memory may be almost gone. But the lovingkindness of God shall not depart. Once in Christ thou shalt never be forsaken. Jesus shall stand by thee. Satan shall not harm thee. Death shall not separate thee from the everlasting love of God in Christ. Thou shalt "never perish."*

* The death-bed of Bruce the famous Scotch divine is a striking illustration of this part of my subject. Old Fleming describes it in the following words. "His sight failed him, whereupon he called for his Bible: but finding his sight gone he said," "Cast up to me the eight chapter of Romans and set my finger on these words, I am persuaded that neither death nor life, etc. shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord; Now," said he, "is my finger upon them?" when they told him it was, he said, "Now God be with you my children: I have breakfasted with you and shall sup with my Lord Jesus Christ this night," and so gave up the Ghost." *Fleming's fulfilment of prophecy.* 1680.

Reader, may this be your portion in life and death !
And may it be mine !

NOTE REFERRED TO AT PAGE 139.

There are few subjects about which English people are so ignorant, as they are about the real doctrines of the Church of England. Many persons know nothing of the theological opinions of the English Reformers, and of all the leading English divines for nearly a century after the Protestant Reformation. They call opinions old which in reality are new, and they call opinions new which in reality are old.

It would be waste of time to enquire into the causes of this ignorance. Certain it is that it exists. Few people seem to be aware that those doctrines which now are commonly called *evangelical* were the universally received divinity of English Churchmen throughout the reign of Queen Elizabeth and James I. They are not, as many ignorantly suppose, new-fangled views of modern invention. They are simply the "old paths" in which the Reformers and their immediate successors walked. Tractarianism, High Churchism, and Broad Churchism are new systems. Evangelical teaching is neither more or less than the "old school."

The proof of this assertion is to be found in the Church History of the reigns of Elizabeth and James I., and in the writings of the divines of that period. Far be it from me to defend all the sayings and doings of theologians of that date. The student will find in their writings abundant traces of intolerance, illiberality, and bigotry, which I would be the last to defend. But that the vast majority of all Churchmen in that day, held the doctrines which are now called Calvinistic and Evangelical, is to my mind as clear as noon day. And upon no point does the evidence appear to me so clear as upon the doctrine of perseverance.

1. Is it not a historical fact that in queen Elizabeth's reign, in the year, 1595, the university of Cambridge compelled Mr. Barret of Caius College, to read a public recantation and apology in St. Mary's Church, for having denied the doctrines of final perseverance and election? (*The Church of England's old antithesis to new Arminianism, by William Prynne, page 56.*)

2. Is it not a historical fact, that the Articles drawn up by the Vice Chancellor and heads of the university of Cambridge, against the above-mentioned Barret, conclude with the following words? "This doctrine, being not about inferior points of matters indifferent, but of the substantial ground, and chief comfort and anchor-ground of our salvation, hath been to our knowledge continually and generally received, taught, and defended in this university, in lectures, disputations, and sermons, and in other places in sermons, since the beginning of her Majesty's reign, and is so still holden; and we take it agreeable to the doctrine of the Church of England." (*Edwards' Veritas Redux, page 534.*)

3. Is it not a historical fact that in the same queen Elizabeth's reign, in the same year 1595, the Lambeth articles were drawn up and approved by Archbishop Whitgift and Bishop Bancroft (afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury,) and that they contain the following proposition, "A true living and justifying faith and the Spirit of God who justifies, is not extinguished, falleth not away, vanisheth not in the elect, either finally or totally." These articles were not added to our confession of faith, but Fuller's words nevertheless are perfectly true: "The testimony of these learned divines is an infallible evidence, what were the general and received doctrines of England in that age." (*Fuller's Church History. Tegg's edition. Third volume, page 150.*)

4. Is it not a historical fact, that in the year 1640, in James the First's reign, this doctrine of perseverance was considered at the Hampton Court conference. The Puritan party wished the Lambeth articles to be added to the thirty-nine articles. Their request was not granted, but on what grounds? *Not because the doctrine of perseverance was objected to, but because king James thought it better "not to stuff the book of Articles with all conclusions theological."* While even Overall, Dean of St. Paul's, whose soundness on this point was most suspected, used these remarkable words: "Those who are justified according to the purpose of God's election, though they might fall into grievous sin, and thereby into the present estate of damnation, yet never totally nor finally from justification, but are in time renewed by God's Spirit unto lively faith, and repentance." (*Fuller's Church History, 3rd vol. p. 181.*)

5. Is it not a historical fact, that the first exposition of the thirty-nine Articles, published after the Reformation, contains a full and distinct assertion of the doctrine of perseverance, in the part which treats of the seventeenth Article? I allude to the work of Thomas Rogers, Chaplain to Archbishop Bancroft, to whom the book was dedicated, 1607. (*Rogers on the Thirty-nine Articles. Parker's Society Edition.*)

6. Is it not a historical fact, that in the year 1612, king James the First published a declaration written by himself, against one, Vorstius, an Arminian Divine, in which he calls the doctrine, that the saints may fall away, "a wicked doctrine, a blasphemous heresy, directly contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England." (*Prynne, Church of England's Antithesis, &c., p. 206.*)

7. Is it not a historical fact, that the same king James the First, in the same year 1612, wrote a letter to the states of Holland, in consequence of a Dutch Divine named Bertius having written a book on the apostacy of the saints, and sent it to the Archbishop of Canterbury. In this letter, the king speaks of Bertius as "a pestilent heretic," and calls his doctrine "an abominable heresy," and in one place says, "he is not ashamed to lie so grossly as to avow, that the heresies contained in the said book are agreeable with the religion, and profession of the Church of England." (*Prynne, Church of England's Antithesis to Arminianism. p. 206.*)

8. Is it not a historical fact, that the same king James the First, in the year 1616, visited with severe displeasure, a clergyman named Sympson, a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, for preaching before him, at Royston, that true believers may totally fall away? (*Fuller's History of Cambridge, page 160.*)

9. Is it not a historical fact, that in the Synod of Dort, in the year 1619, the doctrine of final perseverance was strongly asserted? Now several English Divines were formally deputed to attend this Synod and take part in its proceedings, and amongst others, Bishop Davenant, and Bishop Carleton. And is it not notorious, that however much they differed from the conclusions of the Synod in matters of discipline, they "approved all the points of doctrine?" (*Fuller's Church History, vol. 3, p. 279.*)

10. Last, but not least, is it not a historical fact, that all the leading Archbishops and Bishops in the reigns of Elizabeth, and James the First, were thorough Calvinists in matters of doctrine? And is it not a notorious fact that the final perseverance of the saints is one of the leading principles of the system that is called Calvinistic? Heylin himself is obliged to confess this. He says, "It was safer for any man in those times to have been looked

upon as a heathen or publican than an anti-calvinist." (*Heylin's Life of Laud*. p. 52.)

I lay these ten facts before the reader, and ask his serious attention to them. I am unable to understand how any one can avoid the conclusion which may be drawn from them. To me it appears an established point in history, that the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints is the old doctrine of the Church of England, and the denial of this doctrine is new.

I could easily add long quotations to strengthen the evidence which I have brought forward. I could turn to marginal notes of the "Bishop's Bible," published under the special superintendence and approval of Archbishop Parker. I could quote passage upon passage from the writings of Archbishops Cranmer, Grindal, Sandys, Whitgift, Abbott, Usher, and Leighton,—of Bishops Ridley, Latimer, Jewell, Pilkington, Babington, Hall, Davenant, Carleton, Prideaux, and Reynolds. In short, the difficulty is to find theological writers in the reigns of Elizabeth and James the First, who ever thought of disputing final perseverance. William Prynne gives the names of no less than 130 writers who held that the saints could never perish, and gives the reference to their works. But at the time he wrote, (1629) he could only find four writers who had denied the perseverance of the saints, and taught the possibility of their apostacy. I could supply many quotations from the writers he names. But I spare the reader. He has probably heard enough.

I have made this note longer than I intended, but the importance of the facts which it contains must be my apology. The whole subject in the present day is one of the deepest moment.

The evangelical members of the Church of England are constantly taunted by their adversaries with holding new views. They are told that their opinions are not "Church opinions," and that they ought to leave the Church of England, and become dissenters without delay. I entreat all readers of these pages never to be moved by such taunts and insinuations. I tell them that those who make them are only exposing their own thorough ignorance of the first principles of their own communion. I tell them not to be ashamed of their own views, for they have no cause. I tell them that the evangelical members of the Church of England, are the true representatives of the views of the Reformers, and their immediate successors, and that those who oppose them know not what they are saying.

If I were in a position to offer counsel to my evangelical brethren at this crisis, I would earnestly advise them to *hold fast the doctrine of final perseverance, and never let it go*. There is no

doctrine, which so entirely overturns the modern view of baptismal regeneration. There is no doctrine in consequence which Tractarians dislike so much, and labour so hard to overthrow. It is a barrier in their path. It is a thorn in their side. It is an argument which they cannot answer. The seventeenth Article of the Church of England is one of the keys of our position. He that gives up the doctrine of perseverance may rest assured that he has sold the pass to his enemy. Once allow that saving grace may be totally lost, and in the day of controversy you will never hold your ground.

Last, but not least, I would counsel all clergymen who are persecuted for holding evangelical opinions, to arm themselves with a thorough knowledge of old Church of England divinity, and to take comfort in the thought that they have truth on their side. They, at all events, are explaining the thirty-nine Articles according to the intention of those who composed them. Their opponents are either neglecting the Articles, or attaching to them a new meaning.

How far it is reasonable and fair to persecute godly men for preferring the views of the Reformers to these of Laud, I leave it to others to decide. But those who are persecuted may take comfort in the reflection that if they err, they err in good company. And if they ever suffer loss of character and position for holding final perseverance and denying the inseparable connection of baptism and regeneration, they may boldly tell the world, that they suffer because they agree with Latimer, and Hooper, and Jewell, and Whitgift, and Carleton, and Davenant, and Usher, and Leighton, and Hooker, and Hall. He that suffers in company with these good men has no cause to be ashamed.

Keep it Holy!

EXODUS XX. 8.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."

Reader,

There is a subject in the present day which demands the serious attention of all professing Christians. That subject is the Christian Sabbath, or Lord's Day.

It is a subject which is forced upon our notice, whether we like it or not. The minds of Englishmen are agitated by questions arising out of it. "Is the observance of a Sabbath binding on Christians? Have we any right to tell a man that to do his business or seek his pleasure on a Sunday is a sin? Is it desirable to open places of public amusement on the Lord's Day?" All these are questions which are continually asked. They are questions to which we ought to be able to give a decided answer.

The subject is one on which "divers and strange doctrines" abound. Statements are continually made about Sunday, both by speakers and writers, which plain unsophisticated readers of the Bible find it impossible to reconcile with the Word of God. If these

statements proceeded only from the ignorant and irreligious part of the world, the defenders of the Sabbath would have no reason to be surprised. But they may well wonder when they find educated and religious persons among their adversaries. It is a melancholy truth that in some quarters the Sabbath is wounded by those who ought to be its best friends.

The subject is one which is of immense importance. It is not too much to say that the prosperity or decay of English Christianity depends on the maintenance of the Christian Sabbath. Break down the fence which now surrounds the Sunday, and our Sunday Schools will soon come to an end. Let in the flood of worldliness and dissipation on the Lord's Day without let or hindrance, and our congregations will soon dwindle away. There is not too much religion in the land now. Destroy the sanctity of the Sabbath, and there would soon be far less. Nothing in short, I believe, would so thoroughly advance the kingdom of Satan in England as to withdraw legal protection from the Lord's Day. It would be a joy to the infidel. But it would be an insult and offence to God.

Reader, I ask your attention for a few minutes, while I say a few plain words on the subject of the Sabbath. I have no new argument to advance. I can say nothing that has not been said, and said better too, a hundred times before. But at a time like this it becomes every Christian writer to cast in his mite into the treasury of truth. As a minister of Christ, a father of a family, and a lover of my country, I feel bound to plead in behalf of the old English Sunday. My sentence is emphatically expressed in the words of Scripture,—let

us "keep it holy." My advice to all Christians is to contend earnestly for the whole day against all enemies both without and within. It is worth a struggle. Let our united cry be, "We do not want the Sabbath law of England to be changed."

There are four points in connection with the Sabbath which require examination. On each of these I wish to offer a few remarks.

I. The authority on which the Sabbath stands.

II. The purpose for which the Sabbath was appointed.

III. The manner in which the Sabbath ought to be kept.

IV. The ways in which the Sabbath may be profaned.

I. Let me, in the first place, consider *the authority on which the Sabbath stands.*

I hold it to be of primary importance to have this point clearly settled in our minds. Here is the very rock on which many of the enemies of the Sabbath make shipwreck. They tell us that the day is "a mere Jewish ordinance," and that we are no more bound to keep it holy than to offer sacrifice. They proclaim to the world that the observance of the Lord's Day rests upon nothing but church authority, and cannot be proved by the word of God.

Now I believe that those who say such things are entirely mistaken. Amiable and respectable as many

of them are, I regard them in this matter as being thoroughly in error. Names go for nothing with me in such a case. It is not the assertion of a hundred divines, whether living or dead, that will make me believe black is white, or reject the evidence of plain texts of Scripture. I care little to be told what Jeremy Taylor, and Paley, and Arnold have thought. The grand question is, "were their thoughts worth credit?—were they right or wrong?"

My own firm conviction is, that the observance of a Sabbath day is *part of the eternal law of God*. It is not a mere temporary Jewish ordinance. It is not a man-made institution of priest-craft. It is not an unauthorised imposition of the Church. It is one of the everlasting rules which God has revealed for the guidance of all mankind. It is a rule that many nations without the Bible have lost sight of, and buried, like other rules, under the rubbish of superstition and heathenism. But it was a rule intended to be binding on all the children of Adam.

What saith the Scripture? This is the grand point after all. What railway directors and newspaper writers think matters nothing. We are not going to stand at their bar when we die. He that judgeth us is the Lord God of the Bible. What saith the Lord?

I turn to *the history of creation*. I there read that "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." (Gen. ii. 3.) I find the Sabbath mentioned in the very beginning of all things. There are five things which were given to the father of the human race, in the day that he was made. God gave him a dwelling place, a work to do, a command to observe, a help-meet to be his com-

panion, and a Sabbath day to keep. I am utterly unable to believe that it was in the mind of God that there ever should be a time when Adam's children should keep no Sabbath.*

I turn to *the giving of the law* on Mount Sinai. I there read one whole commandment out of ten devoted to the Sabbath day, and that the longest, fullest, and most minute of all. (Exod. xx. 8—11.) I see a broad, plain distinction between these ten commandments and any other part of the law of Moses. It was the only part spoken in the hearing of all the people. It was delivered under circumstances of singular solemnity, and accompanied by thunder, lightning, and an earthquake. It was the only part written on tables of stone by God Himself. It was the only part put *inside* the ark. I find the law of the Sabbath side by side with the law about idolatry, murder, adultery, theft, and the like. I am utterly unable to believe that it was meant to be only of temporary obligation.†

* "The text, Genesis ii. 3, is so clear for the ancient institution of the Sabbath, that I see no reason on earth why any man should make doubt thereof; especially considering that the very Gentiles, both civil and barbarous, both ancient and of late days, as it were by an universal kind of tradition, retained the distinction of the seven days of the week."—*Letter to Twiss by Archbishop Usher*. 1650.

† The learned Bishop Andrews wisely remarks that it is a dangerous thing to make the fourth commandment ceremonial, and of mere temporary obligation: The Papists will then have the second commandment also to be ceremonial; and there is no reason why there may not be as well three as two, and so four and five, and so all." "We hold that all ceremonies are ended and abrogated by Christ's death: but the Sabbath is not."—*Bishop Andrews on the Moral Law*. 1642.

I turn to *the writings of the Old Testament prophets*. I find them repeatedly speaking of the breach of the Sabbath side by side with the most heinous transgressions of the moral law. (Ezek. xx. 13, 16, 24; xxii. 8, 26.) I find them speaking of it as one of the great sins which brought judgments on Israel and carried the Jews into captivity. (Nehem. xiii. 18; Jerem. xvii. 19—27.) It seems clear to me that the Sabbath, in their judgment, is something far higher than the washings and cleansings of the ceremonial law. I am utterly unable to believe, when I read their language, that the fourth commandment was one of the things one day to pass away.

I turn to *the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ when He was upon earth*. I cannot discover that our Saviour ever let fall a word in discredit of any one of the ten commandments. On the contrary, I find Him declaring at the outset of His ministry, "that He came not to destroy the law but to fulfil," and the context of the passage where He uses these words, satisfies me that He was not speaking of the ceremonial law, but the moral. (Matt. v. 17.) I find Him speaking of the ten commandments as a recognized standard of moral right and wrong: "Thou knowest the commandments." (Mark x. 19.) I find Him speaking eleven times on the subject of the Sabbath, but it is always to correct the superstitious additions which the Pharisees had made to the law of Moses about observing it, and never to deny the holiness of the day.* He no more abolishes the Sabbath,

* See Bishop of Calcutta's seven Sermons on the Lord's Day. pp. 60, 61.

than a man destroys a house when he cleans off the moss or weeds from its roof. Above all, I find our Saviour taking for granted the continuance of the Sabbath, when He foretells the destruction of Jerusalem. "Pray ye," He says to the disciples, "that your flight be not on the Sabbath day." (Matt. xxiv. 20.) I am utterly unable to believe, when I see all this, that our Lord did not mean the fourth commandment to be as binding on Christians as the other nine.

I turn to *the writings of the apostles*. I there find plain speaking about the temporary nature of the ceremonial law and its sacrifices and ordinances. I see them called "carnal" and "weak." I am told they are a "shadow of good things to come,"—a "schoolmaster to bring us to Christ," and "ordained till the time of reformation." But I cannot find a syllable in their writings which teaches that any one of the ten commandments is done away. On the contrary, I see St. Paul speaking of the moral law in the most respectful manner, though he teaches strongly that it cannot justify us before God. (Rom. vii. 12; xiii. 8; Eph. vi. 2; 1 Tim. i. 8.) I see St. James and St. John recognizing the moral law, as a rule acknowledged and accredited among those to whom they wrote. (James ii. 10; 1 John iii. 4.) Again I say that I am utterly unable to believe that when the apostles spoke of the law, they only meant nine commandments, and not ten.*

* It is only fair to mention that many great and learned divines have held that the text Hebrews iv. 9, distinctly teaches the authority of the Christian Sabbath. The marginal reading is, "there remaineth the keeping of a Sabbath." I offer no opinion on the

I turn to *the practice of the apostles*, when they were engaged in planting the church of Christ. I find distinct mention of their keeping one day of the week as a holy day. (Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2.) I find the day spoken of by one of them as "the Lord's day." (Rev. i. 10.) Undoubtedly the day was changed. It was made the first day of the week in memory of our Lord's resurrection, instead of the seventh. But I believe the apostles were divinely inspired to make that change, and at the same time wisely directed to make *no public decree* about it. The decree would only have raised a ferment in the Jewish mind, and caused needless offence. The change was one which it was better to effect gradually, and not to force on the consciences of weak brethren. The spirit of the fourth commandment was not interfered with by the change in the smallest degree. The Lord's day on the first day of the week, was just as much a *day of rest after six days labour* as the seventh day Sabbath had been. But why we are told so pointedly about the "first day of the week" and the "Lord's day," if the apostles kept no one day more holy than another, is to my mind wholly inexplicable.

I turn, in the last place, to *the pages of unfulfilled prophecy*. I find there a plain prediction that in the last days, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, there shall still be a Sabbath. "From one Sabbath to another shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." (Isaiah lxvi. 23.) The subject of

point. I only remark that Owen, Edwards, and Dwight, all held this view. (See Bishop of Calcutta's Sermons on Lord's Day, pp. 92, 93.)

this prophecy no doubt is deep. I do not pretend to say that I can fathom all its parts. But one thing is very certain to me, and that is, that in the glorious days to come on the earth, there is to be a Sabbath, and a Sabbath not for the Jews only, but for "all flesh." And when I see this, I am utterly unable to believe, that God meant the Sabbath to cease between the first coming of Christ and the second. I believe He meant it to be an everlasting ordinance in His church.

Reader, I place these arguments from Scripture before you, and ask your serious attention to them. To my own mind it appears very plain, that wherever God has had a church, in Bible times, God has also had a Sabbath Day. My own firm conviction is, that a church without a Sabbath would not be a church on the model of Scripture.*

* The following quotations from Baxter, Lightfoot, Horsley, and Wells, need no apology. They speak for themselves. In a day like the present, when we are so often told that learned divines deny the divine authority of the Lord's Day, it may be well to show the reader that there are other divines, and some eminently learned, who take an entirely different view.

Let us hear what Baxter says. "It hath been the constant practice of all Christ's churches in the whole world, ever since the days of the apostles to this day, to assemble for public worship on the Lord's Day, as a day set apart thereto by the apostles. Yea, so universal was this judgment and practice, that there is no one church, no one writer, or one heretic that I remember to have read of, that can be proved even to have dissented or gainsaid it till of late times.

"If any will presume to say that men properly endued with the Spirit, for the work of His commission, did notwithstanding do such a great thing as to appoint the Lord's Day for Christian worship, without the conduct of the Spirit, they may by the

Let me close this part of the subject, by offering to the reader two cautions, which I consider are eminently required by the temper of the times.

For one thing, *let us all beware of undervaluing the Old Testament.* There has arisen of late years a most unhappy tendency to slight and despise any religious argument which is drawn from an Old Testament source, and to regard the man who uses it as a dark, benighted, and old fashioned person. We shall all do well to remember that the Old Testament is just as much inspired as the New, and that the religion of both Testaments is in the main, and at the root, one

same way of proceeding, pretend it to be as uncertain of every particular book and chapter in the New Testament, whether or no they wrote it by the Spirit."—*Baxter on the Divine appointment of the Lord's Day.* 1680.

Let us next hear Lightfoot. "The first day of the week was everywhere celebrated for the Christian Sabbath, and which is not to be passed over without observing, as far as appears from Scripture there is nowhere any dispute about the matter. There was controversy concerning circumcision, and other points of the Jewish religion, whether they were to be retained or not, but nowhere do we read concerning the changing of the Sabbath. There were indeed some Jews converted to the Gospel, who, as in some other things, they retained a smack of their old judaism, so they did in the observance of days, (Rom. xiv. 5; Gal. iv. 10), but yet not rejecting or neglecting the Lord's Day. They celebrated it and made no manner of scruple, it appears concerning it; but they would have their old festival days too: and they disputed not at all, whether the Lord's Day were to be celebrated, but whether the Jewish Sabbath ought not to be celebrated also."—*Lightfoot's Works.* vol. xii. p. 556. 1670.

Let us next hear Bishop Horsley. "The Sabbath Days of which St. Paul speaks to the Colossians (Col. ii. 16,) were not the Sundays of the Christians, but the Saturdays and other Sabbaths of the Jewish calendar. The judaizing heretics, with whom St.

and the same. The Old Testament is the Gospel in the bud: the New Testament is the Gospel in full flower. The Old Testament is the Gospel in the blade: the New Testament is the Gospel in full ear. The Old Testament saints saw many things through a glass darkly. But they looked to the same Christ by faith, and were led by the same Spirit as ourselves. Let us therefore never listen to those who sneer at Old Testament arguments. Much infidelity begins with an ignorant contempt of the Old Testament.

For another thing, *let us beware of despising the law of the ten Commandments.* I grieve to observe how ex-

Paul was all his life engaged, were strenuous advocates for the observation of the Jewish festivals in the Christian church, and St. Paul's admonition to the Colossians is that they should not be disturbed by the censure of those who reproached them for neglecting to observe the Jewish Sabbaths with Jewish ceremonies. It appears from the first Epistle to the Corinthians that the Sunday was observed in the church of Corinth with St. Paul's own approbation. It appears from the apocalypse that it was generally observed in the time when that book was written by St. John; and it is mentioned by the earliest apologists of the Christian faith as a necessary part of Christian worship."—*Bishop Horsley's Sermons.*

Let us hear Wells. "Darkness and division there hath been enough in the church, to quarrel with institutions and appointments of former times. But the perpetual silence of the church on this particular, infallibly shows the divine right of the Lord's Day. And the churches are so silent, because they dare not attempt such an enterprise as to raze the foundations of a divine institution."—*Wells' Practical Sabbatarian.* p. 587.

The whole subject of the change from the seventh day Sabbath to the Lord's Day, is one which the reader will find admirably handled in the Bishop of Calcutta's Sermons on the Lord's Day. Those sermons, and "Willison on the Lord's Day," are by far the two best works on the Sabbath question.

ceedingly loose and unsound the opinions of many men are upon this subject. I have been astonished at the coolness with which even clergymen sometimes speak of them as a part of Judaism, which may be classed with sacrifices and circumcision. I wonder how such men can read them to their congregations every week! For my own part, I believe that the coming of Christ's Gospel did not alter the position of the ten Commandments one hair's breadth. If anything, it rather exalted and raised their authority. I believe that in due place, and proportion, it is just as important to expound and enforce them as to preach Christ crucified. By them is the knowledge of sin. By them the Spirit teaches men their need of a Saviour. By them the Lord Jesus teaches His people how to walk and please God. I suspect it would be well for the Church if the ten commandments were more frequently expounded in the pulpit than they are. At all events I fear that much of the present ignorance on the Sabbath question is attributable to erroneous views about the fourth commandment.

II. The second point I propose to examine, is *the purpose for which the Sabbath was appointed.*

I feel it imperatively necessary to say something on this point. There is no part of the Sabbath question about which there are so many ridiculous misstatements put forward. Many are raising a cry in the present day, as if we were inflicting a positive injury on them in calling on them to keep the Sabbath holy. They talk as if the observance of the day were a heavy yoke,

like circumcision and the washings and purifications of the ceremonial law. They rail at ministers of religion for defending the Sabbath, as if they only wanted it kept for their own selfish ends. They insinuate that our motives are not pure, and that we feel "our craft in danger." And all this sounds very plausible in the ears of ignorant persons.

Once for all, let us understand that all such statements are founded in entire misconception, and are rank delusions. The Sabbath is God's merciful appointment for *the common benefit of all mankind*. It was "made for man." It is given for the good of all classes, for the laity quite as much as for the clergy. It is not a yoke, but a blessing. It is not a burden, but a mercy. It is not a hard wearisome requirement, but a mighty public benefit. It is not an ordinance which man is bid to use in faith, without knowing why he uses it. It is one which carries with it its own reward. It is good for man's body and mind. It is good for nations. Above all, it is good for souls.

The Sabbath is *good for man's body*. We all need a day of rest. On this point at any rate all medical men are agreed. Curiously and wonderfully made as the human frame is, it will not stand incessant work without regular intervals of repose. The gold-diggers of California soon found out that. Reckless and ungodly as many of them probably were,—urged on as they were no doubt by the mighty influence of the hope of gain,—they still found out that a seventh day's rest was absolutely needful to keep themselves alive. Without it they discovered that in digging gold they were only

digging their own graves. I firmly believe that one reason why the health of working clergymen so frequently fails, is the great difficulty they find in getting a day of rest. I am sure if the body could tell us its wants, it would cry loudly, "remember the Sabbath Day." *

The Sabbath is *good for man's mind*. The mind needs rest quite as much as the body. It cannot bear an uninterrupted strain on its powers. It must have its intervals to unbend and recover its force. Without them it will either prematurely wear out, or fail suddenly like a broken bow. The testimony of Mr. Wilberforce on this point is very striking. He declared that he could only attribute his own power of endurance to his regular observance of the Sabbath Day. He remembered that he had observed some of the mightiest intellects among his cotemporaries fail suddenly at last, and their possessors come to melancholy ends. And he was satisfied that in every such case of mental shipwreck, the true cause was neglect of the fourth commandment.

The Sabbath is *good for nations*. It has an enormous

* "During the excesses of the first French revolution, at the close of last century, Christianity and the Sabbath were abolished in France, but the mere necessities of man's nature compelled the Atheistical government to institute a day of rest of their own, which they called a decade, occurring every tenth day. What a confession of the reasonableness of the divine command!"—*Bishop of Calcutta's Sermons*. p. 163.

There is an admirable tract on this subject, by Professor Miller, of Edinburgh, entitled. "Physiology in Harmony with the Bible."

effect both on the character and temporal prosperity of a people. I firmly believe that a people which regularly rests one day in seven will do more work, and better work, in a year, than a people which never rests at all. Their hands will be stronger. Their minds will be clearer. Their power of attention, application, and steady perseverance will be far greater. What two nations on earth are so prosperous at this day as Great Britain, and the United States of America? Where shall we find on the globe so much energy, so much steadiness, so much success, so much public confidence, so much morality, and so much good government as in those two countries? Let others account for all this as they please. I say without hesitation, that the grand secret of it all has been the observance of the Sabbath. Great Britain and the United States, with all their sins, are the two most Sabbath-keeping nations on earth. They have given up seven years of good working days in the last fifty years to keeping the Lord's Day holy. But have they lost anything by it? No! indeed. The two Sabbath-keeping nations are the most prosperous nations in the world.

Last, but not least, the Sabbath is *an unmixed good for man's soul*. The soul has its wants just as much as the mind and body. It is in the midst of a hurrying, bustling world, in which its interests are constantly in danger of being jostled out of sight. To have those interests properly attended to, there must be a special day set apart. There must be a regularly recurring time for examining the state of our souls. There must be a day to test and prove us, whether we are prepared

for an eternal heaven. Take away a man's Sabbath, and his religion soon comes to nothing. As a general rule there is a regular flight of steps from "no Sabbath" to "no God."

I know well that many say that "*religion does not consist in keeping days and seasons.*" I agree with them. I am quite aware that it needs something more than Sabbath observance to save our souls. But I would like such persons to tell us plainly what kind of religion that is which teaches people to keep no days holy at all. It may be the religion of poor corrupt human nature, but I am sure it is not the religion of Revelation. It is not the religion which tells us that we "must be born again," and believe in Christ, and live holy lives. Revealed religion teaches me that it is not quite so cheap and easy a thing to go to heaven, as many now-a-days seem to fancy, and that it is essential to our soul's prosperity that in every week we give God a day.

I know well that there are some good people who contend that "*every day ought to be holy*" to a true Christian, and on this ground deprecate the special sanctification of the first day of the week. I respect the conscientious convictions of such people. I would go as far as any one in contending for an "every day religion," and protesting against a mere Sabbath Christianity. But I am satisfied that the theory is unsound and unscriptural. I am convinced that, taking human nature as it is, the attempt to regard every day as a Lord's Day would result in having no Lord's Day at all. None but a thorough fanatic, I presume, would say that it is wrong to have stated seasons for private prayer, on

the ground that we ought to "pray always." And no man, I am persuaded, who looks at the world with the eyes of common sense, will fail to see, that to bring religion to bear on men with full effect, there must be one day in the week set apart for its business.

Reader, I ask you to consider well what I have just been saying. I believe I have advanced nothing that can be fairly gainsaid. I believe that if every church and chapel were pulled down, and every minister of religion banished from this kingdom, it would still be an unmixed benefit for the nation to preserve untouched the institution of the Sabbath, and an act of suicidal folly to part with it. Whether Englishmen know it or not, their Sabbath is one of their richest possessions and the grand secret of their position in the world. It is good for their bodies, minds, and souls. Of it the famous words may be truly used, that "it is the cheap defence of a nation."

III. I propose, in the third place, *to show the manner in which the Sabbath ought to be kept.*

This is a branch of the subject on which great difference of opinion exists. It is one on which even the friends of the Sabbath are not thoroughly agreed. Many, I believe, would contend as strongly as I do for a Sabbath, but not for the Sabbath for which I contend. But in a matter like this I can call no man master. My desire is simply to state what appears to be the mind of God as revealed in holy Scripture.

Once for all I must plainly say that I cannot entirely agree with those who tell us that they do not want a

Jewish Sabbath, but a Christian one. I doubt whether such persons clearly know what they mean. If they object to a Pharisaic Sabbath, I agree with them. If they object to a Mosaic Sabbath, I would have them consider well what they say. I can find no clear evidence that the Old Testament Sabbath was intended by Moses to be more strictly kept than the Christian Sunday. The case of the man stoned for gathering sticks on the Sabbath is clearly not a case in point. It was a special offence committed under specially heinous aggravations, in the very face of Mount Horeb, and just after the giving of the law. It is no more a precedent than the striking dead of Ananias and Sapphira in the Acts, for lying, and there is no proof that such a punishment was ever after repeated. My own belief is that the explanations of the law of the Sabbath given by our Lord, are the very explanations which Moses himself would have given. I have a strong suspicion, that allowing for the difference of the two dispensations, David, and Samuel, and Isaiah would not have kept their Sabbath very differently from St. John and St. Paul.

What then appears to be the will of God about the manner of observing the Sabbath Day? There are two general rules laid down for our guidance, and by them all questions must be decided.

One plain rule about the Sabbath is, that *it must be kept as a day of rest*. All work of every kind ought to cease as far as possible, both of body and mind. "Thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy

cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates." Works of necessity and mercy may be done. Our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us this, and teaches also that all such works were allowable in the Old Testament times. "Have ye not read," He says, "what David did?"— "Have ye not read that the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are blameless?" (Matt. xii. 5.) Whatever, in short, is necessary to preserve and maintain life, whether of ourselves, or of the creatures, or to do good to the souls of men, may be done on the Sabbath Day without sin.*

The other great rule about the Sabbath is, that *it must be kept holy*. Our rest is not to be the rest of a beast, like that of the ox and the ass, which have neither mind nor soul. It is not to be a carnal, sensual, rest, like that of the worshippers of the golden calf, who "sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play."

* "Works needful for the comfortable passing of the Sabbath, as dressing of moderate food and the like, may be done on the Sabbath Day. For, seeing Christ allows us to lead an ox to water, and requireth not to fetch in water for him over night, he alloweth us to dress meats, and requireth not to dress it over night. For the order in the law of not kindling a fire pertained alone to the business of the tabernacle, and that order of dressing what they would dress on the sixth day pertained alone to the matter of manna."—*Leigh's Body of Divinity*. 1654.

"Not only those works which are of absolute necessity, but those which are of great conveniency may lawfully be done on the Lord's Day. Such are kindling of fire, preparing of meat, and many other particulars too numerous to be mentioned.—Only let us take this caution, that we neglect not the doing of those things till the Lord's Day, which might be well done before, and then plead necessity or convenience for it."—*Bishop Hopkins on the 4th Commandment*. 1690.

It is to be emphatically a holy rest. It is to be a rest in which, as far as possible, the affairs of the soul may be attended to, the business of the world to come minded, and communion with God and Christ kept up. In short, it ought never to be forgotten that it is "the Sabbath of the Lord our God." (Exod. xx. 10.)

Reader, I ask attention to these two general rules. I believe that by them all Sabbath questions may be safely tested. I believe that within the bounds of these rules every lawful and reasonable want of human nature is fully met, and that whatsoever transgresses these bounds is sin.

I am no pharisee. Let no hard-working man, who has been confined to a close room for six weary days, suppose that I object to his taking any lawful relaxation for his body on the Sunday. I see no harm in a quiet walk on a Sunday, provided always that it does not take the place of going to public worship, and is really quiet, and like that of Isaac.* (Gen. xxiv. 63.) I read of our Lord and His disciples walking through the corn-fields on the Sabbath Day. All I say is, beware that you do not turn liberty into license,—beware that you do not injure the souls of others in seeking relaxation for yourself,—and beware that you never forget you have a soul as well as a body.†

* "If you walk abroad this day, choose to do it alone as much as possible, for people going in troops to the fields occasion idleness, vain talking, sporting, and misspending precious Sabbath-time."—*Willison on the Lord's Day*. (An admirable book.)

† I cannot see that the employment of horses to take us to church on the Sabbath is wrong, where it is a case of plain neces-

I am no enthusiast. I want no 'tired labourer to misunderstand my meaning, when I bid him to keep the Sabbath holy. I do not tell any one that he ought to pray all day, or read his Bible all day, or go to church all day, or meditate all day, without let or cessation, on a Sunday. All I say is that the Sunday rest should be a *holy rest*. God ought to be kept in view. God's Word ought to be studied. God's house ought to be attended. The soul's business ought to be specially considered. And I say that everything which prevents the day being kept holy in this way, ought as far as possible, to be avoided.

I am no admirer of a gloomy religion. Let no one suppose that I want Sunday to be a day of sadness, and unhappiness. I want every Christian to be a happy man. I wish him to have "joy and peace in believing," and to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." I want every one to regard Sunday as the brightest, cheerfullest day of all the seven. And I tell every one who finds such a Sunday as I advocate a wearisome day, that there is something sadly wrong in the state of his heart. I tell him plainly that if he cannot enjoy a "holy" Sunday, the fault is not in the day, but in his own soul.

sity, and without the use of them the Gospel cannot be heard. But in such cases people should use their own horses, if they have them.—The following quotation deserves notice. "When the Shunammite came to her husband for the ass, he saith to her, why should you go to him to-day? it is neither Sabbath-day, nor new moon. The meaning is that the Shunammite was wont to go out to hear the prophet, and because she had not means would ride. Therefore when the means of sanctification are wanting, a man may take a Sabbath-day's journey. He may go where they are used to be gotten."—*Bishop Andrews on the Moral Law*. 1642.

I can well believe that many will think that I am setting the standard of Sabbath observance far too high. The thoughtless and worldly, the lovers of money and lovers of pleasure, will all exclaim that I am requiring what is impossible. It is easy to make such assertions. The only question for a Christian ought to be, "What does the Bible teach?" God's measure of what is right must surely not be brought down to the measure of man. Man's measure should rather be brought up to the measure of God.

I want no other standard of Sabbath observance than that which is laid down in the fourth commandment. I want neither more nor less. It is a rule which has been sanctioned by the Prayer Book of the Church of England, the writings of all the leading Puritans, and the Scotch confession of faith. No English churchman, no Scotch presbyterian, no nonconformist who walks in the steps of his forefathers, has any just right to find fault with it.

I maintain no other standard of Sabbath observance than that which all the best and holiest Christians, of every church and nation, have maintained almost without exception. It is extraordinary to mark the harmony there is among them on this point. They have differed widely on other subjects in religion. They have even disagreed as to the grounds on which they defend Sabbath sanctification. But as soon as you come to the practical question "how the Lord's Day ought to be observed," the unity among them is truly surprising.

Last, but not least, I want no other standard of Sabbath observance than that to which a calm, rational

reflection on things yet to come, will lead every sober-minded person. Are we really going to die one day and leave this world? Are we about to appear before God in another state of existence? Have we any hope that we are about to spend an endless eternity in God's immediate presence? Are these things so, or are they not? Surely, if they are, it is not too much to ask men to give one day in seven to God. It is not too much to require them to test their own meetness for another world, by spending the Sabbath in special preparation for it. Common sense, reason, conscience, will combine, I think, to say, that if we cannot spare God one day in a week, we cannot be living as those ought to live who are going to die.

IV. The last thing I propose to do is to expose some of *the ways in which the Sabbath is profaned*.

This is a painful and melancholy part of the subject. But it is one that must not be avoided. The Sabbath, no doubt, is far better kept than it was a hundred years ago. Still, after all that has been done, there remains amongst us a vast amount of Sabbath profanation, which is every week crying against England in the ears of God.

The census of 1851 reveals the fearful fact that five millions of our fellow-countrymen go to no place of worship at all on a Sunday. It is a fact that should make our ears tingle. What an enormous quantity of weekly sin against God this single fact brings to light!

There are two kinds of Sabbath desecration which require to be noticed. One is that more *private* kind of which thousands are continually guilty, and which

can only be checked by awakening men's consciences. The other is that more *public* kind, which can only be remedied by the pressure of public opinion, and the strong arm of the law.

When I speak of *private Sabbath desecration*, I mean that reckless, thoughtless, secular way of spending Sunday, which every one who looks round him must know is common. How many make the Lord's Day a day for visiting their friends and giving dinner parties,—a day for looking over their accounts and making up their books,—a day for going journies and quietly transacting worldly business,—a day for reading newspapers or new novels,—a day for writing letters or talking politics and idle gossip—a day in short for anything rather than the things of God.*

Now all this sort of thing is wrong, decidedly wrong. Thousands, I firmly believe, never give the subject a thought. They sin from ignorance and inconsideration. They only do as others. They only spend Sunday as their fathers and grandfathers did before them. But this does not alter the case. It is utterly impossible to say, that to spend Sunday as I have described is to "*keep the day holy*." It is a plain breach of the fourth commandment, both in the letter and in the spirit. It

* The Sunday post is one of the greatest injuries to the cause of Sabbath observance in the present day. It is astonishing how much harm is done by receiving letters and newspapers on a Sunday, by answering the one and reading the other. It distracts the minds of people, and prevents their receiving benefit from what they hear in Church. In my own parish we have long ceased to have a Sunday post. This was granted to us as a privilege, in consequence of a memorial to the Postmaster General.

is impossible to plead necessity or mercy in one instance of a thousand. And small and trifling as these breaches of the Sabbath may seem to be, they are exactly the sort of things that prevent men communing with God and getting good from His day.

When I speak of *public desecration of the Sabbath*, I mean those many open, unblushing practices, which meet the eye on Sundays in the neighbourhood of large towns. I refer to the practice of keeping shops open, and buying and selling on Sundays. I refer especially to Sunday trains on railways, Sunday steam boats on the rivers, and excursions to tea gardens and places of public amusement. And especially I refer to the daring efforts which many are making in the present day, to throw open such places as the British Museum, the National Gallery, and the Crystal Palace on Sundays, and to have bands playing in the public Parks.

On all these points I feel not the smallest doubt in my own mind. These ways of spending the Sabbath are all wrong, decidedly wrong. So long as the Bible is the Bible, and the fourth commandment the fourth commandment, I dare not come to any other conclusion. They are all wrong.

These ways of spending Sunday are *none of them works of necessity or works of mercy*. There is not the slightest likeness between them and any of the things which the Lord Jesus explains to be lawful on the Sabbath Day. To heal a sick person, or pull an ox or an ass out of a pit is one thing. To travel in an excursion train, or visit picture galleries is quite another. The difference is as great as between light and darkness.

These ways of spending Sunday are *none of them of a holy tendency, or calculated to do any good to souls*. What soul was ever converted by tearing down to Brighton or dashing down to Gravesend? What heart was ever softened or brought to repentance by gazing at Titians and Vandykes? What sinner was ever led to Christ by looking at the Nineveh Bull or the Pompeian Court? What worldly man was ever turned to God by listening to polkas, waltzes, or opera music? No! indeed! all experience teaches that it needs something more than the beauties of art and nature, to teach man the way to heaven.

These ways of spending Sunday *have never yet conferred moral or spiritual good in any place where they have been tried*. They have been tried for hundreds of years in Italy, in Germany, and in France. Sunday music has been long tried in continental cities. The people of Paris have had their Sunday visits to the fountains, and statues at Versailles. The Italians and Germans have had their splendid works of art. But what benefit have they derived that we should wish to imitate them? What advantages have we to gain by making a London Sunday like a Sunday at Paris, or Vienna, or Rome? I say decidedly we have nothing to gain. It would be a change for the worse, and not for the better.

Last, but not least, these ways of spending Sunday *inflict a cruel injury on the souls of multitudes of people*. Railway trains and steamboats cannot be run on Sundays, without employing hundreds of persons. Clerks, porters, ticket-takers, policemen, guards, engine drivers,

stokers, omnibus drivers, must all work on the Sabbath Day, if people will make Sunday a day for travelling and excursions. Museums, exhibitions, and galleries of pictures cannot be opened on Sundays, without servants and attendants to take care of them and wait on those who visit them. And have not all these unfortunate persons immortal souls? Beyond doubt they have. Do they not all need a day of rest, as much as any one else? Beyond doubt they do. But Sunday is no Sunday to them, so long as these public desecrations of the Sabbath are permitted. Their life becomes a long unbroken chain of work, work, unceasing work. In short, what is play to others becomes death to them. Away with the idea that a pleasure-seeking, exhibition-visiting, Continental Sabbath is mercy to any one! It is nothing less than an enormous fallacy to call it so. *Such a Sabbath is real mercy to nobody, and is positive sacrifice to some.*

I write these things with sorrow. I know well to how many myriads of my fellow-countrymen they apply. I have spent many a Sunday in large towns. I have seen with my own eyes how the Day of the Lord is made by multitudes a day of worldliness, a day of ungodliness, a day of carnal mirth, and too often a day of sin. But the extent of the disease must not prevent us exposing it. The truth must be told.

There is one general conclusion to be drawn from the conduct of those who publicly desecrate the Sabbath in the ways I have described. They show plainly that they are at present "without God" in the world. They are like those of old who said "When will the

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Sabbath be gone?"—"What a weariness is it!" (Amos viii. 5. Mal. i. 13.) It is an awful conclusion, but it is impossible to avoid it. Scripture, history, and experience all combine to teach us, that delight in the Lord's Word, the Lord's service, the Lord's people, and the Lord's Day will always go together. Sunday railway excursionists, and Sunday pleasure-seekers are their own witnesses. They are every week practically declaring, "*We do not like God—we do not want Him to reign over us.*"

It is not the slightest argument, in reply to what I have said, that many great and learned men see no harm in travelling on Sundays and visiting exhibitions. It matters nothing in religious questions, "who does a thing?" The only point to be ascertained is, "whether it be right." Let God be true and every man a liar. We must never follow a multitude to do evil.

Reader, the public ways of profaning the Sabbath I have referred to are likely to be often thrust on your notice, if you live many years in England. Remember what I have told you. They are an open breach of God's commandment. Have nothing to do with them yourself. Use every lawful means in your power, both publicly and privately, to prevent others having anything to do with them. Heed not the epithets of puritans, pharisees, methodists, bigotted, and narrow-minded. Be not moved by the specious arguments of newspaper writers. If they only studied their Bibles as much as politics, they would not write as they do. Fall back on that old book which has stood the test of eighteen hundred years, and of which every word is

true. Take your stand on the Bible, and hold fast its teaching. Whatever others may think lawful, let your sentence ever be that one day in seven, and one whole day, ought to be kept holy to God.

And now, in concluding this tract, I wish to address a parting word to several classes of persons into whose hands it may fall. I write as a friend to men's souls. I have no interest at heart but that of true religion. I ask for a fair and patient hearing.

1. I appeal first to *all readers of this tract who are in the habit of breaking the Sabbath*. Whether you break it in public or private, whether you break it in company or alone, I have somewhat to say to you. Do not refuse to read it.

I ask you to consider seriously, how you will answer for your present conduct in the day of judgment. I put it solemnly to your conscience. I ask you to think quietly and calmly, how utterly unfit you are to appear before God. You cannot live always. You must one day lie down and die. You cannot escape the great assize in the world to come. You must stand before the great white throne, and give account of all your works. You have before you but two alternatives,—an eternal heaven, or an eternal hell. These are great realities, and you know they are true. I repeat it deliberately. Unless you are prepared to take up some silly fable of man's invention, and to be that poor credulous creature, a sceptic, you know these things are true.

Now where is your fitness for the solemn change

which is yet before you ? Where is your preparedness for meeting the God of the Bible, and reckoning with Him ? Where is your readiness for an eternity in His company, and the society of saints and angels ? Where is your meetness for a heaven, which is nothing but an eternal Sabbath, an everlasting Sunday, a Lord's day without end ? Yes ! *I may well ask, where ?* You cannot give an answer. You cannot give God one single day in seven ! It wearies you to spend one seventh part of your time in attempting to know anything about Him, before whose bar you are going one day to stand ! His Bible wearies you ! His ministers weary you ! His house wearies you ! His praises weary you ! The excursion train is better ! The newspaper is better ! The merry dinner party is better ! Anything in short, anything is better than God ! Alas ! what an awful state this is to be in. But, alas ! how common !

Oh ! Sabbath-breaker, unhappy Sabbath-breaker, consider your ways, and be wise. What harm has Sunday done the world, that you should hate it so much ? What harm has God done you, that you should so obstinately turn your back on His laws ? What injury has religion done to mankind, that you should be so afraid of having too much ? Look at that body of your's, and think how soon it will be dust and ashes. Look at that earth on which you walk, and think how soon you will be six feet beneath its surface. Look on the heavens above you, and think of the mighty Being who is the eternal God. Look into your own heart, and think how much better it would be to be God's friend than God's enemy.

As ever you would lie down on your dying-bed with comfort,—as ever you would leave this world with a good hope, break off from your Sabbath-desecration, and sin no more. Let the time past suffice you to have robbed God of His day. For the time to come give God His own.

Go the very next Sunday after you read this tract to the house of God, and hear the Gospel preached. Confess your past sin at the throne of grace, and ask pardon through that blood which “cleanses from all sin.” Arrange your time on Sunday so that you may have leisure for quiet, sober meditation on eternal things. Avoid the company that would lead you to talk only of this world. Take down your long-neglected Bible, and study its pages. Murder no man’s soul by obliging him to work on Sunday in order that you may play. *Do it, do it, do it without a week’s delay.* It may be hard at first, but it is worth a struggle. Do it, and it will be well for you both in time and eternity.

2. I appeal, in the next place, to *all readers of this tract who belong to the working classes.* Whether you work in town or country,—whether you labour on the land or in factories, I have something of importance to say to you. Give me a hearing.

I ask you then never to be taken in and deluded by those who want the sanctity of the Lord’s Day to be more publicly invaded than it is, and yet tell you they are “your friends.” Believe me, however well-meaning and fair-spoken such persons may be, they are not your

real friends. They are in reality *your worst enemies*. They are taking the surest course to add to your burdens. They do not mean it very likely, but in reality they are doing you a cruel injury.

Be assured that if English Sundays are ever turned into a day of play and amusement, they will soon become a day of labour and work. It is vain to suppose that it can be avoided. It never has been in other countries. It never would be in our own land. Once establish the principle that galleries and museums and crystal palaces are to be thrown open on Sundays, and you let in the thin edge of the wedge. The enemy would have got inside the walls. The sacredness of the day of rest would be entirely gone. Shops would be opened. Farmers would insist on cultivating the land. Factories would go on working. Contractors would press forward their operations. You would have lost your Sabbath, and with it you would have lost your best friend.

Tell those who would fain make our Sundays more worldly, and more like week-days, that you want no change of the day of that description.—Tell them that if they want to secure you a little more time for rest and relaxation, they should not try to take that time out of Sunday.—Tell them to take a little piece out of one of the six working days, if possible, but not a bit out of the day of God.—Tell them that as the world has got six days for its business, and God has only left Himself one for His, it is only fair and right that the world should give up some of its time, before we begin robbing God of His.—Ask them, in a word, why they

cannot give you a *Saturday half-holiday*, and insist on their giving an answer.*

Working men, into whose hands this tract may fall, I do entreat you not to be deceived about the Sabbath question. Of all people on earth you are the most interested in it. Resolve, I beseech you, that you will not part with your Sunday. Remember Esau's folly. Sell not your choicest privileges for a mess of pottage. Believe me, none have so much to lose in this matter as you, and none have so little to gain.

3. I appeal in the next place to *all readers of this tract who profess to reverence the Sabbath*, and have no wish to see its character changed. I have only one thing to say to you, but it deserves serious attention.

I ask you then to consider whether you may not be more strict in keeping the Sabbath Day holy than you have been hitherto. I am sadly afraid there is much laxity in many quarters on this point. I fear that many who have no thought of infringing the fourth commandment, are culpably inconsiderate and careless as to the way in which they obey its precepts. I fear that the world gets into the Sundays of many a respectable church-going family far more than it ought to do. I fear that many keep the Sabbath themselves, but never give their servants a chance of keeping it holy. I fear that many who keep the Lord's Day with much outward propriety when they are at home, are

* The Saturday half-holiday has been tried for more than two years at the largest brewery in London (Hanbury, Buxton, & Co.), and I believe with complete success.

often grievous Sabbath-breakers when they go abroad. I fear that hundreds of English travellers do things on Sundays on the Continent, which they would never do in their own land.

This is a sore evil. It weakens the hands of all who defend the cause of the Sabbath to an enormous extent. It supplies the enemies of the Lord's Day with an argument which they know too well how to use. Let us all remember this. If we really love the Lord's Day, let us prove our love by our manner of using it. Wherever we are, whether at home or abroad,—whether in Protestant or Roman Catholic countries,—let our conduct on Sunday be such as becomes the day. Let us never forget that the eyes of the Lord are in every place, and that the fourth commandment is just as binding on us in Italy, Germany, or France, as it is in our own country. Last, but not least, let us remember that the fourth commandment speaks of our “man-servant and maid-servant,” as well as ourselves.

4. I appeal, in the last place, *to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and are zealous in His cause.* I have one thing to say to you in connection with the Sabbath question, which I commend to your most serious attention.

I ask you then to consider whether it does not become the solemn duty of all true Christians to take far more effectual measures than we have done hitherto, to preserve the holiness of the Lord's Day. For my own part I am satisfied that it is our duty, and that we must go to work in a very different way from that hitherto adopted.

We all complain of Sabbath desecration in large towns. We sorrow over the crowds who every Sunday spend their time in places of sensual amusement, or fill the steam-boats and railway trains. They are all evidently in a deplorable state of spiritual ignorance. They are a growing evil which threatens mischief. But are we taking the right means to remedy the evil? I say unhesitatingly that we are not.

We besiege the House of Commons with petitions when the advocates of these Sabbath breaking crowds demand an extension of their present license to sin. But is that enough? No! it is not.

We form societies to defend the Lord's Day, and propose measure after measure in Parliament to stop Sunday trading. But is that enough? No! it is not.

The truth must be spoken. We must begin lower down. We cannot make people religious by acts of parliament alone. We must teach right as well as forbid wrong. We must try to prevent evil as well as repress it. We must strike at the root of the evils we deplore. We must endeavour to evangelize the masses of men and women who now break their Sabbaths every week. We must show them a better way. We must divert this fountain of Sabbath-breaking into different channels, and not content ourselves with damming up its waters when they overflow.

Are there not many parishes in our large towns, where you may now find 12 or 15000 people under one clergyman, and with one church to go to? Have we any right to wonder, if a large proportion of this population regularly break the Sabbath every week?

The bulk of the people in such a parish know nothing hardly about the way to "keep the Sunday holy." They have no place of worship to go to, if they have a mind to keep it. To expect such a population to keep the Sabbath holy, is preposterous and absurd. They are quite as much to be pitied as to be blamed. We have surely little right to find fault with them for not honouring the Lord's Day, while we leave them in utter ignorance of its meaning.

What then ought we to do? We ought to break up these large overgrown parishes into districts of a manageable size, containing not more than 3000 people at the very most.* We ought at once to put a minister of the Gospel and two lay-agents in every one of these districts, and give them the spiritual oversight of the people. We must not wait to build a fine church. We must send a man who is able to preach anywhere,—in a garret, a coach-house, an alley, or even in the street,—and give him abundant liberty to work, unfettered by precedent and routine. This is the best antidote for the evils over which we mourn. The preached Gospel applied to the conscience, and not pains and penalties,—the preached Gospel, and not fines and imprisonment,—the preached Gospel carried home to every house in

* The "Islington Church Home Mission" is an attempt to work out the very principles which I am advocating in this part of my tract, in the great parish of Islington. It is a movement which I, for one, regard with the deepest interest. It is emphatically a move in the right direction, and deserves the cordial support of all who desire to spread evangelical religion in connection with the Church of England.

a parish,—this is the grand remedy for Sabbath-breaking.

I know well that all this sounds impracticable and utopian to many ears. Ecclesiastical laws,—rectorial rights,—the want of funds,—the want of men, all these and twenty other like objections will at once be started.

Be it so. All I say is that until something of this kind is done we shall never stop the Sabbath-breaking of great towns. It will be a festering sore on the face of our country, which will every now and then break out and lead to enormous mischief.

For my own part I see nothing in the proposal I have made which might not easily be attained, if the subject was fairly grappled with. *Laws* are repealed easily enough when public opinion demands it, and if they are bad, the sooner they are repealed the better.—*Rectorial rights* must never stand in competition with the wants of immortal souls. They have succumbed already to the burial acts in many cases,—and why not again? They have had to give way, when it was needful to provide for dead bodies. We may surely require them to give way, when we want to provide for dead souls.—*Men*, I believe, of the right sort are to be found, if the Bishops will only encourage them to come forward.—*Money*, I am convinced, will never be wanting for a good cause, if a case is really made out. And after all we had better sacrifice fifty canonries than leave our great town parishes in their present condition.

I commend these things to the attention of all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Let London, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, and other large towns,

be thoroughly evangelized, and you will strike a deadly blow at the root of all Sabbath-breaking. Leave them alone, or go on at the rate we go at present, and my firm conviction is that we shall never be free from a Sabbath question agitation. It will return periodically, like an ague fit, until the sources which now supply it are dried up.

The plain truth is, that the Sabbath-breaking of the present day is one among many proofs of the low state of vital religion and the awful want of union among British Christians. We have wasted our time on petty internal quarrels, and neglected the mighty work of converting souls. We have wrangled and squabbled about matters of mint, anise, and cummin, and forgotten our Master's business. We have allowed vast town populations to grow up in semi-heathen ignorance, and are now reaping the fruit of our gross neglect in their Sabbath-breaking propensities. In short, while the doctors have been disputing, the disease has been spreading, and the patient dying.

I pray God that we may all learn wisdom, and amend our ways before it be too late. We want less party spirit and sectarianism, and more work for Christ. We want a return to the old paths of the apostles in every branch of the church. We want a generation of ministers who can do their work without a grand Gothic edifice costing £10,000, and whose first ambition, is to go into every room in their parish, and tell the story of the cross of Christ.

I am not sanguine in my expectations. Routine and precedent seem to bind men now-a-days with iron chains.

But I deliberately repeat once more, that unless our large towns are more thoroughly evangelized, we shall never be long without a struggle **TO KEEP THE SABBATH HOLY.**

I take the liberty of recommending to the attention of my brethren in the ministry, the following extract from the charge of the Venerable Bishop of Calcutta, for the year 1838.—

“Honour especially in your public and private instructions the primeval law of the Sabbath; the chief vestige of our Paradisaical state; the one command inscribed on the order of creation; the grand external symbol of revealed religion; a prominent branch of the first table of the moral law, and standing on the same footing as the love of God and our neighbour; the theme of the Prophets’ exhortations in their descriptions of the evangelical age; vindicated indeed from the uncommanded austerities of the Pharisees, but honoured by the constant practice of our blessed Saviour; transferred by the Lord and his Apostles, after the resurrection, to that great day of the Church’s triumph, but remaining the same in its apportionment of time, its spiritual character, and its divine obligation on the whole human race; and handed down and commended by the constant and unvaried usage of the Church from the very birth of Christianity to the present hour.”

St. Peter at Antioch.

GALATIANS II. 11—16.

- "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.*
- "For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.*
- "And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; inso-much that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.*
- "But when I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, if thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews;*
- "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles.*
- "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."*

Reader,

Did you ever consider what the Apostle Peter did at Antioch? It is a question that deserves serious consideration.

What the Apostle Peter did *at Rome* we are often told. Roman-Catholic writers furnish us with many stories about this. Legends, traditions, and fables abound on the subject. But unhappily for these writers, Scripture is utterly silent upon this point. There is nothing in Scripture to show that the Apostle Peter ever was at Rome at all.

But what did the Apostle Peter do *at Antioch*? This is the point on which I want to fasten your attention. This is the subject of the passage from the Epistle to the Galatians, which heads this tract. On this point, at any rate, the Scripture speaks clearly and unmis-takeably. Read the passage over again, and ponder well what it contains.

The six verses you have just read are striking on many accounts. They are striking, you will observe, from the *event* which they describe: here is one apostle rebuking another!—They are striking, when you consider who the two *men* are: Paul, the younger, rebukes Peter the elder!—They are striking, when you remark the *occasion*: this was no glaring fault, no flagrant sin, at first sight, that Peter had committed! Yet the Apostle Paul says, “I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.” He does more than this:—he reproves Peter publicly for his error before all the Church at Antioch. He goes even further:—he writes an account of the matter, which is now read in a hundred languages all over the world.

Reader, it is my firm conviction that the Holy Ghost means us to take particular notice of this passage of Scripture. If Christianity had been an invention of

man, these things would never have been recorded. An impostor, like Mahomet, would have hushed up the difference between two apostles. The Spirit of truth has caused these verses to be written for our learning, and we shall do well to take heed to their contents.

There are three great lessons from Antioch, which I think we ought to learn from this passage.

I. The *first* lesson is, that *great ministers may make great mistakes.*

II. The *second* is, that *to keep the truth of Christ in His church is even more important than to keep peace.*

III. The *third* is, that *there is no doctrine about which we ought to be so jealous as justification by faith without the deeds of the law.*

I. The first great lesson we learn from Antioch is, *that great ministers may make great mistakes.*

What clearer proof can we have than that which is set before us in this place? Peter, without doubt, was one of the greatest in the company of the apostles. He was an old disciple. He was a disciple who had had peculiar advantages and privileges. He had been a constant companion of the Lord Jesus. He had heard the Lord preach, seen the Lord work miracles, enjoyed the benefit of the Lord's private teaching, been numbered among the Lord's intimate friends, and gone out and come in with Him all the time He ministered upon earth. He was the apostle to whom the keys of the

kingdom of heaven were given, and by whose hand those keys were first used. He was the first who opened the door of faith to the Jews, by preaching to them on the day of Pentecost. He was the first who opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, by going to the house of Cornelius, and receiving him into the church. He was the first to rise up in the council of the fifteenth of Acts, and say, "Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." And yet here this very Peter, this same apostle, plainly falls into a great mistake. The Apostle Paul tells us, "I withstood him to the face." He tells us "that he was to be blamed." He says "he feared them of the circumcision." He says of him and his companions, that "they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel." He speaks of their "dissimulation." He tells us that by this dissimulation even Barnabas, his old companion in missionary labours, "was carried away."

Reader, think what a striking fact this is. This is Simon Peter! This is the third great error of his, which the Holy Ghost has thought fit to record! Once we find him trying to keep back our Lord, as far as he could, from the great work of the cross, and severely rebuked. Then we find him denying the Lord three times, and with an oath. Here again we find him endangering the leading truth of Christ's Gospel. Surely we may say, "Lord, what is man?" The Church of Rome boasts that the Apostle Peter is her founder and first bishop. Be it so. Grant it for a moment. Let us

only remember, that of all the apostles there is not one, excepting, of course, Judas Iscariot, of whom we have so many proofs that he was a *fallible* man. Upon her own showing the Church of Rome was founded by the most fallible of the Apostles.*

But it is all meant to teach us that even the Apostles themselves, when not writing under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, were at times liable to err. It is meant to teach us that the best men are weak and fallible so long as they are in the body. Unless the grace of God holds them up, any one of them may go astray at any time. It is very humbling, but it is very true. True Christians are converted, justified and sanctified. They are living members of Christ, beloved children of God, and heirs of eternal life. They are elect, chosen, called, and kept unto salvation. They have the Spirit. But they are *not infallible*.

Will not rank and dignity confer infallibility? No! They will not. It matters nothing what a man is called. He may be a Czar, an Emperor, a King, a Prince. He may be a Pope or a Cardinal, an Archbishop or a Bishop, a Dean or an Archdeacon, a Priest

* It is curious to observe the shifts to which some writers have been reduced, in order to explain away the plain meaning of the verses which head this tract. Some have maintained that Paul did not really rebuke Peter, but only feignedly, for show and appearance sake! Others have maintained that it was not Peter the Apostle, who was rebuked, but another Peter, one of the seventy! Such interpretations need no remark. They are simply absurd. The truth is that the plain honest meaning of the verses entirely overthrows the favourite Roman Catholic doctrine of the primacy and superiority of Peter over the rest of the Apostles.

or a Deacon. He is still a *fallible man*. Neither the crown, nor the diadem, nor the anointing oil, nor the mitre, nor the imposition of hands, can prevent a man making mistakes.

Will not numbers confer infallibility? No! They will not. You may gather together princes by the score, and bishops by the hundred, but, when gathered together, they are still liable to err. You may call them a council, or a synod, or an assembly, or a conference, or what you please. It matters nothing. Their conclusions are still the conclusions of *fallible men*. Their collective wisdom is still capable of making enormous mistakes.

Reader, the example of the Apostle Peter at Antioch is one that does not stand alone. It is only a parallel of many a case that we find written for our learning in Holy Scripture. Do you not remember Abraham the father of the faithful following the advice of Sarah, and taking Hagar for a wife? Do you not remember Aaron, the first high priest, listening to the children of Israel, and making a golden calf? Do you not remember Nathan the prophet telling David to build a temple? Do you not remember Solomon, the wisest of men, allowing his wives to build their high places? Do you not remember Asa, the good king of Judah, seeking not to the Lord, but to the physicians? Do you not remember Jehoshaphat, the good king, going down to help wicked Ahab? Do you not remember Hezekiah, the good king, receiving the ambassadors of Babylon? Do you not remember Josiah, the last of Judah's good kings, going forth to fight with Pharaoh? Do you not remem-

ber James and John wanting fire to come down from heaven? These things deserve to be remembered. They were not written without cause. They cry aloud, *No Infallibility!*

And who does not see, when he reads the history of the Church of Christ, repeated proofs that the best of men can err? The early fathers were zealous according to their knowledge, and ready to die for Christ. But many of them countenanced monkery, and nearly all sowed the seeds of many superstitions. The Reformers were honoured instruments in the hand of God for reviving the cause of truth on earth. Yet hardly one of them can be named who did not make some great mistake. Martin Luther held pertinaciously the doctrine of consubstantiation. Melancthon was often timid and undecided. Calvin permitted Servetus to be burned. Cranmer recanted and fell away for a time from his first faith. Jewell subscribed to Popish doctrines for fear of death. Hooper disturbed the Church of England by over scrupulosity about vestments. The Puritans in after times denounced toleration as Abaddon and Apollyon. Wesley and Toplady last century abused each other in most shameful language. Irving in our own day gave way to the delusion of tongues. All these things speak with a loud voice. They all lift up a beacon to the Church of Christ. They all say "Cease ye from man;" "call no man master;" "call no man Father upon earth;" "let no man glory in man;" "he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." They all cry, *No Infallibility!*

Reader, the lesson is one that we all need. We are

all naturally inclined to lean upon man whom we can see, rather than upon God whom we cannot see. We naturally love to lean upon the ministers of the visible church, rather than upon the Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd and Bishop and High Priest, who is invisible. We need to be continually warned and set upon our guard.

I see this tendency to lean on man everywhere. I know no branch of the Protestant Church of Christ which does not require to be cautioned upon the point. It is a snare, for example, to the English Episcopalian to make idols of Bishop Pearson and "the Judicious Hooker." It is a snare to the Scotch Presbyterian to pin his faith on John Knox, the Covenanters, and Dr. Chalmers. It is a snare to the Methodists in our day to worship the memory of John Wesley. It is a snare to the Independent to see no fault in any opinion of Owen and Doddridge. It is a snare to the Baptist to exaggerate the wisdom of Gill, and Fuller, and Robert Hall. All these are snares, and into these snares how many fall!

We all naturally love to have a pope of our own. We are far too ready to think, that because some great minister or some learned man says a thing,—or because our own minister, whom we love, says a thing,—it must be right, without examining whether it is in Scripture or not. Most men dislike the trouble of thinking for themselves. They like following a leader. They are like sheep,—when one goes over the gap all the rest follow. Here at Antioch, even Barnabas was carried away. We can well fancy that good man saying,

"An old apostle, like Peter, surely cannot be wrong. Following him I cannot err."

And now, reader, let us see what practical lessons we may learn from this part of our subject.

For one thing let us learn not to put implicit confidence in any man's opinion, merely *because he lived many hundred years ago*. Peter was a man who lived in the time of Christ himself, and yet he could err.

There are many who talk much in the present day about the "voice of the primitive church." They would have us believe that those who lived nearest the time of the Apostles, must of course know more about truth than we can. There is no foundation for any such opinion. It is a fact, that the most ancient writers in the Church of Christ are often at variance with one another. It is a fact that they often changed their own minds, and retracted their own former opinions. It is a fact they often wrote foolish and weak things, and often showed great ignorance in their explanations of Scripture. It is vain to expect to find them free from mistakes. *Infallibility is not to be found in the early fathers, but in the Bible.*

For another thing, let us learn not to put implicit confidence in any man's opinion, *merely because of his office as a minister*. Peter was one of the very chiefest apostles, and yet he could err.

This is a point on which men have continually gone astray. It is the rock on which the early church struck. Men soon took up the saying, "Do nothing contrary to the mind of the bishop." But what are bishops, priests, and deacons? What are the best of ministers

but men,—dust, ashes, and clay,—men of like passions with yourself, men exposed to temptations, men liable to weaknesses and infirmities? Remember that word of Scripture, “Who is Paul and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?” Bishops have often driven the truth into the wilderness, and decreed that to be true which was false. The greatest errors have been begun by ministers. Hophni and Phineas made religion to be abhorred by the children of Israel. Annas and Caiaphas, though in the direct line of descent from Aaron, crucified the Lord. Arius, that great heresiarch, was a minister. It is absurd to suppose that ordained men cannot go wrong. You should follow us so far as we teach according to the Bible, so long as we set before you the Word of God, but no further. Believe us, so long as we can say, “Thus it is written,” “thus saith the Lord;” but further than this you are not to go. *Infallibility is not to be found in ordained men, but in the Bible.*

For another thing, let us learn not to place implicit confidence in any man’s opinion, *merely because of his learning*. Peter was a man who had miraculous gifts, and could speak with tongues, and yet he could err.

This is a point again on which many go wrong. This is the rock on which men struck in the middle ages. Men looked on Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus, and Peter Lombard, and many of their companions, as almost inspired. They gave epithets to some of them, in token of their admiration. They talked of “the irrefragable” doctor, “the seraphic” doctor, the “in-

comparable" doctor,—and seemed to think that whatever these doctors said must be true! But what is the most learned of men, if he be not taught by the Holy Ghost? What is the most learned of all divines but a mere fallible child of Adam at his very best? Vast knowledge of books and great ignorance of God's truth may go side by side. They have done so, they may do so, and they will do so in all times. I will engage to say that the two volumes of Robert M'Cheyne's *Memoirs and Sermons*, have done more positive good to the souls of men, than any one folio that Origen or Cyprian ever wrote. I doubt not that the one volume "*Pilgrim's Progress*,"—written by a man who knew no book but his Bible, and was ignorant of Greek and Latin,—will prove in the last day to have done more for the benefit of the world, than all the works of the school-men put together. Learning is a gift that ought not to be despised. It is an evil day when books are not valued in the church. But it is amazing to observe how vast a man's intellectual attainments may be, and yet how little he may know of the grace of God. I have no doubt the authorities of Oxford in the last century, knew more of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, than Wesley, Whitefield, Berridge, or Venn. But they knew little of the Gospel of Christ. *Infallibility is not to be found among learned men, but in the Bible.*

For another thing, let me warn every reader not to place implicit confidence on his own minister's opinion, however godly he may be. Peter was a man of mighty grace, and yet he could err.

Your minister may be a man of God indeed, and

worthy of all honour for his preaching and practice. But do not make a pope of him. Do not place his word side by side with the Word of God. Do not spoil him by flattery. Do not let him suppose he can make no mistakes. Do not lean your whole weight on his opinion, or you may find to your cost that he can err.

It is written of Joash, king of Judah, that he "served God all the days of Jehoiada the priest." Jehoiada died, and then died the religion of Joash. Just so your minister may die, and then your religion may die too;—change, and your religion may change;—go, and your religion may go. Oh! be not satisfied with a religion built upon man. Be not content with saying, "I have hope, because my own minister has told me such and such things." Seek to be able to say, "I have hope, because I find it thus and thus written in the Word of God." If your peace is to be solid, you must go yourself to the fountain of all truth. If your comforts are to be lasting, you must visit the well of life yourself, and draw fresh water for your own soul. Ministers may change. The visible church may be broken up. But he who has the Word of God written in his heart, has a foundation beneath his feet which will never fail him. Honour your minister as a faithful ambassador of Christ. Esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake. But never forget that *infallibility is not to be found in godly ministers, but in the Bible.*

Reader, the things I have mentioned are worth remembering. Bear them in mind, and you will have learned one lesson from Antioch.

II. I now pass on to the second lesson that we learn from Antioch. That lesson is, *that to keep Gospel truth in the church is of even greater importance than to keep peace.*

I suppose no man knew better the value of peace and unity than the apostle Paul. He was the apostle who wrote to the Corinthians about charity. He was the apostle who said, "Be of one mind one toward another," "Be at peace among yourselves," "Mind the same things," "The servant of God must not strive," "There is one body and there is one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism." He was the apostle who said, "I become all things to all men, that by all means I may save some." Yet see how he acts here! He withstands Peter to the face. He publicly rebukes him. He runs the risk of all the consequences that might follow. He takes the chance of everything that might be said by the enemies of the church at Antioch. See, above all, how he writes it down for a perpetual memorial, that it never might be forgotten,—that, wherever the Gospel is preached throughout the world, this public rebuke of an erring apostle might be known and read of all men.

Now, why did he do this? Because he dreaded false doctrine,—because he knew that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,—because he would teach us that we ought to contend for the truth jealously, and fear the loss of truth more than the loss of peace.

Reader, St. Paul's example is one we shall do well to remember in the present day. Many people will put

up with any thing in religion, if they may only have a quiet life. They have a morbid dread of what they call "controversy." They are filled with a morbid fear of what they style, in a vague way, "party spirit," though they never define clearly what party spirit is. They are possessed with a morbid desire to keep the peace, and make all things smooth and pleasant, even though it be at the expence of truth. So long as they have outward order they seem content to give up everything else. I believe they would have thought with Ahab that Elijah was a troubler of Israel, and would have helped the princes of Judah, when they put Jeremiah in prison to stop his mouth. I have no doubt that many of these men of whom I speak, would have thought that Paul at Antioch was a very imprudent man, and that he went too far!

I believe this is all wrong. We have no right to expect anything but the pure Gospel of Christ, unmixed, and unadulterated,—the same Gospel that was taught by the apostles,—to do good to the souls of men. I believe that to maintain this pure truth in the church men should be ready to make any sacrifice, to hazard peace, to risk dissension, and run the chance of division. *They should no more tolerate false doctrine than they would tolerate sin.* They should withstand any adding to or taking away from the simple message of the Gospel of Christ.

For the truth's sake, our Lord Jesus Christ denounced the Pharisees, though they sat in Moses' seat, and were the appointed and authorised teachers of men. "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," he says

eight times over in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. And who shall dare to breathe a suspicion that our Lord was wrong?

For the truth's sake Paul withstood and blamed Peter, though a brother. Where was the use of unity when pure doctrine was gone? And who shall dare to say he was wrong?

For the truth's sake, Athanasius stood out against the world to maintain the pure doctrine about the divinity of Christ, and waged a controversy with the great majority of the professing church. And who shall dare to say he was wrong?

For the truth's sake, Luther broke the unity of the church in which he was born, denounced the Pope and all his ways, and laid the foundation of a new teaching. And who shall dare to say that Luther was wrong?

For the truth's sake, Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, the English reformers, counselled Henry VIII. and Edward VI. to separate from Rome and to risk the consequences of division. And who shall dare to say that they were wrong?

For the truth's sake, Whitefield and Wesley, a hundred years ago, denounced the mere barren moral preaching of the clergy of their day, and went out into the highways and byways to save souls, knowing well that they would be cast out from the church's communion. And who shall dare to say that they were wrong?

Yes! reader, peace without truth is a false peace; it is the very peace of the devil. Unity without the gospel is a worthless unity; it is the very unity of hell.

Let us never be ensnared by those who speak kindly of it. Remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Think not that I came to send peace upon earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword." Remember the praise He gives to one of the churches in the Revelation: "Thou canst not bear them who are evil. Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." Remember the blame He casts upon another, "Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel to teach." Never be guilty of sacrificing any portion of truth upon the altar of peace. Be like the Jews, who, if they found any manuscript copy of the Old Testament Scriptures incorrect in a single letter, burned the whole copy, rather than run the risk of losing one jot or tittle of the Word of God. Be content with nothing short of the whole Gospel of Christ.

Reader, in what way are you to make practical use of the general principles which I have just laid down? I will give you one simple piece of advice. Believe me, it is worthy of serious consideration.

I warn you then, for the truth's sake, *to be very jealous as to the preaching you regularly hear and the place of worship you regularly attend.* Beware of deliberately settling down under any ministry which is positively unsound. I never hesitate to speak my mind on this point. I know well that many think it a shocking thing for a man to forsake his parish church. I cannot see with the eyes of such people. I draw a wide distinction between teaching which is defective and teaching which is thoroughly false,—between teaching which errs on the negative side and teaching which is

positively unscriptural. But I do believe, if false doctrine is unmistakeably preached in a parish church, a parishioner who loves his soul is quite right in not going to that parish church. To hear unscriptural teaching fifty-two days in every year is a serious thing. It is a continual dropping of slow poison into the mind. I think it almost impossible for a man wilfully to submit himself to it, and not take harm. I see in the New Testament we are plainly told to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good." I see in the Proverbs that we are commanded to "cease to hear the instruction which causeth to err from the paths of knowledge." If these words do not justify a man in forsaking any church, if positively false doctrine is preached in it, I know not what words can.

Does any one mean to tell us that to attend the parish church is absolutely needful to an Englishman's salvation? If there is such an one, let him speak out, and give us his name.—Does any one mean to tell us that going to the parish church will save any man's soul, if he dies unconverted and ignorant of Christ? If there is such an one, let him speak out and give us his name.—Does any one mean to tell us that going to the parish church will teach a man anything about Christ, or conversion, or faith, or repentance, if these subjects are hardly ever named in the parish church, and never properly explained? If there is such an one, let him speak out and give us his name.—Does any one mean to say that a man who repents, believes in Christ, is converted and holy, will lose his soul, because he has forsaken his parish church and learned his religion

elsewhere? If there is such an one, let him speak out and give us his name.—For my part I abhor such monstrous and extravagant doctrines. I see not a jot of foundation for them in the Word of God. I trust that the number of those who deliberately hold them is exceedingly small.

There are not a few parishes in England, where the religious teaching is little better than Popery. Ought the laity of such parishes to sit still, be content, and take it quietly? They ought not. And why? Because like St. Paul, they ought to prefer truth to peace.

There are not a few parishes in England where the religious teaching is little better than morality. The distinctive doctrines of Christianity are never clearly proclaimed. Plato or Seneca could have taught almost as much. Ought the laity in such parishes to sit still, be content, and take it quietly? They ought not. And why? Because like St. Paul, they ought to prefer truth to peace.

Reader, I am using strong language in dealing with this part of my subject. I know it. I am trenching on delicate ground. I know it. I am handling matters which are generally let alone, and passed over in silence. I know it. I say what I say from a sense of duty to the church of which I am a minister. I believe the state of the times, and the position of the laity in some parts of England, require plain speaking. Souls are perishing in many parishes in ignorance. Honest members of the Church of England in many districts are disgusted and perplexed. This is no time for smooth words. I am not ignorant of those magic ex-

pressions, "the parochial system, order, division, schism, unity, controversy," and the like. I know the cramping, silencing influence which they seem to exercise on some minds. I too have considered those expressions calmly and deliberately, and on each of them am prepared to speak my mind.

The *parochial system* of England is an admirable thing in theory. Let it only be well administered, and worked by truly spiritual ministers, and it is calculated to confer the greatest blessings on the nation. But it is useless to expect attachment to the parish church, when the minister of the parish is ignorant of the Gospel, or a lover of the world. In such a case we must never be surprised if men forsake their parish church, and seek truth wherever truth is to be found. If the parochial minister does not preach the Gospel and live the Gospel, the terms on which he asks the attention of his parishioners are *virtually violated*, and his claim to be heard is at an end. It is absurd to expect the head of a family to endanger the souls of his children, as well as his own, for the sake of "parochial order." There is no mention of parishes in the Bible, and we have no right to require men to live and die in ignorance, in order that they may be able to say at last, "I always attended my parish church."

Divisions and separations are most objectionable in religion. They weaken the cause of true Christianity. They give occasion to the enemies of all godliness to blaspheme. But before we blame people for them, we must be careful that we lay the blame *where it is deserved*. False doctrine and heresy are even worse than

schism. If people separate themselves from teaching which is positively false and unscriptural, they ought to be praised rather than reprov'd. In such cases separation is a virtue and not a sin. It is easy to make sneering remarks about "itching ears," and "love of excitement," but it is not so easy to convince a plain reader of the Bible that it is his duty to hear false doctrine every Sunday, when by a little exertion he can hear truth. The old saying must never be forgotten, "he is the schismatic who causes the schism."

Unity, quiet, and order among professing Christians are mighty blessings. They give strength, beauty, and efficiency to the cause of Christ. But even gold may be bought too dear. Unity which is obtained by the sacrifice of truth is worth nothing. It is not the unity which pleases God. The Church of Rome boasts loudly of an unity which does not deserve the name. It is unity which is obtained by taking away the Bible from the people, by gagging private judgment, by encouraging ignorance, by forbidding men to think for themselves. Like the exterminating warriors of old, the Church of Rome "makes a solitude and calls it peace." There is quiet and stillness enough in the grave, but it is not the quiet of health, but of death. It was the false prophets who cried "peace," when there was no peace.

Controversy in religion is a hateful thing. It is hard enough to fight the devil, the world and the flesh, without private differences in our own camps. But there is one thing which is even worse than controversy, and that is false doctrine tolerated, allowed, and permitted without protest or molestation. It was con-

troversy that won the battle of Protestant Reformation. If the views that some men hold were correct, it is plain we never ought to have had any Reformation at all! For the sake of peace, we ought to have gone on worshipping the Virgin, and bowing down to images and relics to this very day! Away with such trifling! There are times when controversy is not only a duty but a benefit. Give me the mighty thunder storm rather than the pestilential malaria. The one walks in darkness and poisons us in silence, and you are never safe. The other frightens and alarms for a little season. But it is soon over, and it clears the air. It is a plain scriptural duty to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."

I am quite aware that the things I have said are exceedingly distasteful to many minds. I believe that many are content with teaching which is not the whole truth, and fancy it will be "all the same" in the end. I am sorry for them. I am convinced that nothing but *the whole truth* is likely, as a general rule, to do good to souls. I am satisfied that those who wilfully put up with anything short of the whole truth, will find at last that their souls have received much damage. Three things there are which men ought never to trifle with,—a little poison, a little false doctrine, and a little sin.

I am quite aware that when a man expresses such opinions as those I have just brought forward, there are many ready to say "he is no Churchman." I hear such accusations unmoved. The day of judgment will show who were the true friends of the Church of

England and who were not. I have learned in the last few years that if a minister leads a quiet life, lets alone the unconverted part of the world, and preaches so as to offend none and edify none, he will be called by many "a good Churchman." And I have also learned that if a man studies the Articles and Homilies, labours constantly for the conversion of souls, and preaches as Jewell and Latimer used to preach, he will probably be thought a firebrand and "troubler of Israel," and called no Churchman at all. But I can see plainly that they are not the best Churchmen, who talk most loudly about churchmanship. I remember that none cried "treason," so loudly as Athaliah. Yet she was a traitor herself. I have observed that many who once talked most about churchmanship, have ended by forsaking the Church of England, and going over to Rome. Let men say what they will. *They are the truest friends of the Church of England, who labour most for the preservation of truth.*

Reader, I lay these things before you and ask your serious attention to them. I ask you never to forget that truth is of more importance to a church than peace. I ask you to be ready to carry out the principles I have laid down, and to contend zealously, if needs be, for the truth. Do this, and you will have learned something from Antioch.

III. But I pass on to the third lesson from Antioch. That lesson is, that *there is no doctrine about which we ought to be so jealous as justification by faith without the deeds of the law.*

The proof of this lesson stands out most prominently in the passage of Scripture which heads this tract. What one article of the faith had the Apostle Peter denied at Antioch? None. What doctrine had he publicly preached which was false? None. What, then, had he done? He had done this. After once keeping company with the believing Gentiles as fellow-heirs and brethren, he suddenly became shy of them and withdrew himself. He seemed to think they were less holy and acceptable to God than the circumcised Jews. He seemed to imply, that the believing Gentiles were in a lower state than those who had kept the ceremonies of the law of Moses. He seemed, in a word, to add something to simple *faith* as needful to give man an interest in Jesus Christ. He seemed to reply to the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" not merely "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," but "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, *and be circumcised*, and keep the ceremonies of the law."

Such conduct as this the Apostle Paul would not endure for a moment. Nothing so moved him as the idea of adding any thing to the Gospel of Christ. "I withstood him," he says, "to the face." He not only rebuked him, but he recorded the whole transaction fully, when by inspiration of the Spirit he wrote the epistle to the Galatians.

Reader, I ask your special attention to this point. I ask you to observe the remarkable jealousy which the Apostle Paul shows about this doctrine. Consider the point about which such a stir was made. Mark, in this passage of Scripture, the immense importance of justi-

fication by faith without the deeds of the law. Learn here what mighty reasons the Reformers of the Church of England had for calling it in our eleventh Article, "a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort."

This is the doctrine, remember, which is *essentially necessary to your own personal comfort*. No man on earth is a real child of God, and a saved soul, till he sees and receives salvation by faith in Christ Jesus. No man will ever have solid peace and true assurance, until he embraces with all his heart the doctrine that "we are accounted righteous before God for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings." One reason, I believe, why so many professors in this day are tossed to and fro, enjoy little comfort, and feel little peace, is their ignorance on this point. They do not see clearly justification by faith without the deeds of the law.

This is the doctrine which *the great enemy of souls hates, and labours to overthrow*. He knows that it turned the world upside down at the first. He knows that it turned the world upside down again at the time of the Reformation. He is therefore always tempting men to reject it. He is always trying to seduce churches and ministers to deny or obscure its truth. No wonder that the Council of Trent directed its chief attack against this doctrine, and pronounced it accursed and heretical. No wonder that many who think themselves learned in these days denounce the doctrine as theological jargon, and say that all "earnest-minded people" are justified by Christ, whether they have faith or not. The plain truth is that the doctrine is all gall and wormwood to

unconverted hearts. It just meets the wants of the awakened soul. But the proud unhumiliated man who knows not his own sin, and sees not his own weakness, cannot receive its truth.

This is the doctrine, the *absence of which accounts for half the errors of the Roman Catholic Church*. The beginning of half the unscriptural doctrines of Popery may be traced up to rejection of justification by faith. No Romish teacher, if he is faithful to his Church, can say to an anxious sinner, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.' He cannot do it without additions and explanations, which completely destroy the good news. He dare not give the Gospel medicine, without adding something which destroys its efficacy, and neutralizes its power. Purgatory, penance, priestly absolution, the intercession of saints, the worship of the virgin, and many other man-made services of Popery, all spring from this source. They are all rotten props to support weary consciences. But they are rendered necessary by the denial of justification by faith.

This is the doctrine which is *absolutely essential to a minister's success among his people*. Obscurity on this point spoils all. Absence of clear statements about justification will prevent the utmost zeal doing good. There may be much that is pleasing and nice in a minister's sermons, much about Christ and sacramental union with Him,—much about self-denial,—much about humility,—much about charity. But all this will profit little, if his trumpet gives an uncertain sound about justification by faith without the deeds of the law.

This is the doctrine which is *absolutely essential to the*

prosperity of a church. No church is really in a healthy state, in which this doctrine is not prominently brought forward. A Church may have good forms, and regularly ordained ministers, and the sacraments properly administered, but a church will not see conversion of souls going on under its pulpits when this doctrine is not plainly preached. Its schools may be found in every parish. Its ecclesiastical buildings may strike the eye all over the land. But there will be no blessing from God on that church, unless justification by faith is proclaimed from its pulpits. Sooner or later its candlestick will be taken away.

Why have the churches of Africa and the East fallen to their present state? Had they not bishops? They had. Had they not forms and liturgies? They had. Had they not synods and councils? They had. But they cast away the doctrine of justification by faith. They lost sight of that mighty truth, and so they fell.

Why did our own Church do so little in the last century? and why did the Independents, and Methodists, and Baptists do so much more? Was it that their system was better than ours? No. Was it that our church was not so well adapted to meet the wants of lost souls? No. But their ministers preached justification by faith, and our ministers, in too many cases, did not preach the doctrine at all.

Why do so many English people go to dissenting chapels in the present day? Why do we so often see a splendid Gothic parish church as empty of worshippers as a barn in July, and a little plain brick building, called a Meeting House, filled to suffocation? Is it that

people in general have any abstract dislike to episcopacy, the prayerbook, the surplice and the establishment? Not at all! The simple reason is, in the vast majority of cases, that people do not like preaching in which justification by faith is not fully proclaimed. When they cannot hear it in the parish church they will seek it elsewhere. No doubt there are exceptions. No doubt there are places where a long course of neglect has thoroughly disgusted people with the Church of England, so that they will not even hear truth from its ministers. But I believe, as a general rule, when the parish church is empty and the meeting-house is full, it will be found on enquiry that *there is cause*.

Reader, if these things be so, the Apostle Paul might well be jealous for the truth, and withstand Peter to the face. He might well maintain that any thing ought to be sacrificed, rather than endanger the doctrine of justification in the church of Christ. He saw with a prophetic eye coming things. He left us all an example that we should do well to follow. Whatever we tolerate let us never allow any injury to be done to that blessed doctrine, that we are justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Reader, beware, as long as you live, of any teaching which either directly or indirectly obscures justification by faith. All religious systems which put anything between the heavy-laden sinner and Jesus Christ the Saviour, except simple faith, are dangerous and unscriptural. All systems which make out faith to be anything complicated, anything but a simple, child-like dependance,—the hand which receives the soul's medi-

cine from the physician,—are unsafe and poisonous systems. All systems which cast discredit on the simple Protestant doctrine which broke the power of Rome, carry about with them a plague-spot, and are dangerous to souls.

Baptism is a sacrament ordained by Christ Himself, and to be used with reverence and respect by all professing Christians. When it is used rightly, worthily, and with faith, it is capable of being the instrument of mighty blessings to the soul. But when people are taught that *all* who are baptized are as a matter of course born again and that *all* baptized persons should be addressed as “children of God,” I believe their souls are in great danger. Such teaching about baptism appears to me to overthrow the doctrine of justification by faith. They only are children of God who have faith in Christ Jesus. And all men have not faith.

The Lord’s supper is a sacrament ordained by Christ Himself, and intended for the edification and refreshment of true believers. But when people are taught that all persons ought to come to the Lord’s Table, whether they have faith or not, and that all alike receive Christ’s body and blood who receive the bread and wine, I believe their souls are in great danger. Such teaching appears to me to darken the doctrine of justification by faith. No man eats Christ’s body and drinks Christ’s blood except the justified man. And none are justified until they believe.

Membership of the Church of England is a great privilege. No visible church on earth, in my opinion, offers so many advantages to its members, when rightly

administered. But when people are taught that because they are members of the church, they are as a matter of course members of Christ, I believe their souls are in great danger. Such teaching appears to me to overthrow the doctrine of justification by faith. They only are joined to Christ who believe. And all men do not believe.

Reader, whenever you hear teaching which obscures or contradicts justification by faith, you may be sure there is a screw loose somewhere. Watch against such teaching. Be upon your guard. Once get wrong about justification, and you may bid a long farewell to comfort, to peace, to lively hope, to any thing like assurance in your Christianity. An error here is a worm at the root. Watch, then, about this doctrine, and be upon your guard.

1. Now, in conclusion, let me first of all ask every one who reads this tract, to arm himself with a thorough *knowledge of the written Word of God*. Unless you do this you are at the mercy of any false teacher. You will not see through the mistakes of an erring Peter. You will not be able to imitate the faithfulness of a courageous Paul. An ignorant laity will always be the bane of a church. A Bible-reading laity may save a church from ruin. Read the Bible regularly. Read it daily. Read it with earnest, hearty, and fervent prayer. Become familiar with its contents. Let it dwell in you richly in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that you may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work. Prove all teaching by this blessed book. Try the spirits, whether they be of God. Receive nothing, believe

nothing, follow nothing, which is not in the Bible, nor can be proved by the Bible. Be not a follower of this man or that man, of this party or that party, of this system or that system. Let your rule of faith, your touchstone of all teaching, be the written word of God.

2. In the next place, let me recommend every member of the Church of England to make himself acquainted with *the thirty-nine Articles of his own church*. They are to be found at the end of most prayer books. They will abundantly repay an attentive reading. They are the true standard by which churchmanship is to be tried, next to the Bible. They are the test by which churchmen should prove the teaching of their ministers, if they want to know whether it is "church teaching" or not. I deeply lament the ignorance of systematic Christianity which prevails among many who attend the services of the Church of England. It would be well if such books as Archbishop Usher's *Body of Divinity* were more known and studied than they are. If Dean Nowell's *Catechism* had ever been formally accredited as a formulary of the Church of England, many of the heresies of the last twenty years could never have lived for a day.* But unhappily many persons really know no more about the true doctrines of their own communion, than the heathen or Mahometans. It is useless to expect the laity of the church of England to be zealous

* Dean Nowell was Prolocutor of the Convocation which drew up the Thirty-nine Articles in the form in which we now have them, in the year 1562. His *Catechism* was approved and allowed by Convocation.

for the maintenance of true doctrine, unless they know what their own church has defined true doctrine to be.

3. In the next place, let me entreat all who read this tract to be always *ready to contend for the faith of Christ*, if needful. I recommend no one to foster a controversial spirit. I want no man to be like Goliath; going up and down, saying, "Give me a man to fight with." Always feeding upon controversy is poor work indeed. It is like feeding upon bones. Controversy is the bones of religion, not the flesh. But I do say that no love of false peace should prevent you striving jealously against false doctrine, and seeking to promote true doctrine wherever you possibly can. True Gospel in the pulpit, true Gospel in every religious society you support, true Gospel in the books you read, true Gospel in the friends you keep company with,—let this be your aim, and never be ashamed to let men see that it is so.

4. In the next place, let me entreat all who read this tract to *keep a jealous watch over their own hearts* in these controversial times. There is much need of this caution. In the heat of the battle we are apt to forget our own inner man. Victory in argument is not always victory over the world or victory over the devil. Let the meekness of St. Peter in taking a reproof, be as much your example, as the boldness of St. Paul in reproving. Happy is the Christian who can call the person who rebukes him faithfully, a "beloved brother." (2 Peter iii. 15.) Strive to be holy in all manner of conversation, and not least in your tempers. Make

your own calling and election sure. Try to maintain an uninterrupted communion with the Father and with the Son. Study to keep up constant habits of private prayer. Watch over your prayers, for there religion flourishes. Look well to your reading the Word of God in private. Thus you will be armed for the battle of life, and have the sword of the Spirit well fitted to your hand when the day of temptation comes.

In the last place, let me entreat all members of the Church of England who know what real praying is, *to pray daily for the Church to which they belong*. Pray that the Holy Spirit may be poured out upon it, and that its candlestick may not be taken away. Pray for those parishes in which the Gospel is now not preached, that the darkness may pass away, and the true light shine in them. Pray for those ministers who now neither know nor preach the truth, that God may take away the veil from their hearts, and show them a more excellent way. Nothing is impossible. The apostle Paul was once a persecuting Pharisee. Bishop Latimer was once a bigotted Papist. Thomas Scott was once evidently opposed to evangelical truth. Nothing, I repeat, is impossible. The Spirit can make clergymen preach that Gospel which they now labour to destroy. Let us therefore be instant in prayer.

Reader, I commend the matters contained in this tract to your serious attention. Ponder them well in your heart. Carry them out in your daily practice. Do this, and you will have learned something from the story of St. Peter at Antioch.

The Reading which is Blessed.

REVELATION I. 1—3.

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

"Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."

Reader,

We live in "troublous" and "perilous" times. It is many years since there has been so much in the aspect of public affairs to raise anxious thoughts, as there is at the present day.*

We are always apt to exaggerate the importance of events that happen in our own times. I do not forget that. But I cannot retract what I have just written. I look around me at the things now going on in the world. I look forward to the possible future. And as I look I feel that I am justified in speaking of our

* Written in 1855.

times as "perilous" and "troublous." I appeal to the judgment of all who observe the history of their own day. "*Is there not a cause?*"

There are three heavy judgments which God can send upon a nation,—the sword, the pestilence, and the famine. These three have fallen heavily upon our country within the last twenty-two years. Cholera, that mysterious scourge, has thrice visited the land, each time sweeping off its thousands, and each time baffling the skill of the most eminent physicians. The Irish famine has thinned the population of one of the fairest portions of the queen's dominions, and made us acquainted with miseries which before we had hardly conceived. A war with Russia, now happily concluded, has caused an awful expenditure of English blood and money,—a war, be it remembered, which began about the holy places at Jerusalem,—a war, be it remembered, which was closely bound up with the mysterious wasting away of the Mahometan power. Surely these signs of the times deserve no common notice. They should make us say with Habakkuk, "I will stand upon my watch and set me upon my tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me." (Hab. ii. 1.) They should make us cry with Daniel, "O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" (Dan. xii. 8.)

But one thing, at all events, is clear, and that is the duty incumbent on Christians to search more diligently than ever *the prophetical Scriptures*. Let us not be like the Jews at the first advent, blind to the hand of God, and the fulfilment of His purposes in all that is going on in the world. Let us rather remember that the

word of prophecy is given to be "a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise." (2 Pet. i. 19.) Let us walk much in that light. Let us search "what and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ in the prophets did signify, when He testified before the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." (1 Pet. i. 11.) Let us compare prophecies fulfilled with prophecies unfulfilled, and endeavour to make the one illustrate the other. Let us strive, above all, to obtain clear views of the things yet to be expected, both in the church and the world, before the end comes, and time shall be no more.

With such feelings I now invite you to enter on the consideration of the verses of Scripture, which stand at the head of this tract. Those verses, I need hardly remind you, are the preface or opening words of the Book of Revelation. May the blessing which is specially promised to the readers and hearers of this book be with all into whose hands this tract may fall!

Reader, there are three points to which I desire to call your attention :—

I. The general character of the Book of Revelation.

II. The arguments commonly used to deter men from reading it.

III. The many useful lessons which the study of it is calculated to teach.

I. The *general character of the Book of Revelation.*

The Book of Revelation differs widely from any other

book of the Old or New Testaments. In many respects it is unlike the rest of the Bible. There is a solemn and majestic peculiarity about it. It stands alone.

It is peculiar in *the dignity with which it begins*. The very first verse prepares the reader for something extraordinary—for a book even more directly from God, if possible, than one written under the plenary inspiration of the Holy Ghost. It is called, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass, and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John."

It is peculiar in *the subject matter which it contains*. It contains less of doctrinal and practical Christianity, in proportion to its length, than any book of the New Testament. With few exceptions, its pages are filled with prophecies,—prophecies of the widest range, extending, it seems to me, from the time of John, to the very end of the world—prophecies embracing a vast number of events, spreading over the whole "times of the Gentiles," and covering the mighty interval between the destruction of the first Jerusalem and the descent of the new Jerusalem from heaven—prophecies of most universal importance, having reference not only to the condition and prospects of the believing Church, but also of the unconverted world.

It is peculiar in *the style and dress in which its subject matter is clothed*. With the exception of the 2nd and 3rd chapters, the greater part of the book is composed of visions which the apostle John saw in the spirit. In these visions the vast range of the Church's history was

revealed to him under emblems, figures, allegories, symbols, and similitudes. Of the great majority of these symbols and emblems the meaning is not revealed. The general characteristics of these visions are much alike. All are marked by a vastness, a grandeur, a majesty, a life, a force, a boldness, a sublimity, entirely unparalleled in any human writings. The door opened in heaven—the voice like a trumpet speaking—the sea of glass like crystal—the seven seals—the seven trumpets—the seven vials—the four angels holding the four winds—the mighty angel with a face like the sun, his right foot on the sea, his left on the earth—the woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet—the great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns—the beast that rose out of the sea—the mighty earthquake—the destruction of Babylon—the summoning of the fowls of heaven to the supper of the great God—the binding of Satan—the great white throne—the last judgment—the descent of the New Jerusalem from heaven—the description of the glorious city—who can read such things without being struck by them? Who can study them and avoid the conclusion—“this is written with the finger of God?”

Such is the general character of the Book of Revelation. Such is the book which you are emphatically told, it is “blessed” to read. I will only offer two general remarks on the symbolical style in which the book is composed, and then pass on.

One remark is, that you must not regard the use of symbolical language as entirely peculiar to the Book of Revelation. You will find it in other parts of Scripture.

The very emblems and figures of the Apocalypse, whose meaning seems so obscure, are often employed by the Holy Ghost in the Old Testament. You read, for example, of four living creatures in the fourth chapter. You read of four also in Ezekiel (i. 5.) You read of horses in the vision of the four first seals. You read of horses also in the vision of Zechariah (vi. 2, 3.) You read of a sealed company in the seventh chapter. You read also of a sealed and marked people in the vision of Ezekiel (chap. ix.) You read of a plague of locusts under the fifth trumpet. You read of locusts also in the prophecy of Joel (chap. ii.) You read of John eating the little book in the tenth chapter. You read also of Ezekiel eating the roll in his vision (chap. iii.) You read of olive trees and candlesticks in the vision of the two witnesses. You read of the same emblems in the prophecy of Zechariah (chap. iv.) You read of a beast having seven heads and ten horns in the thirteenth chapter. You read of a similar beast in the Book of Daniel (chap. vii.) You read of a wondrous celestial city in the twenty-first chapter. You have a description of a city scarcely less mysterious, though different, at the end of Ezekiel (chap. xl., &c.) These things are worthy of remark. They shew us that we must not be stumbled by the symbols of Revelation, as if they were altogether a new and strange thing. We must remember they are used in the Old Testament as well as here, though far more sparingly, in communicating the mind of God to man. The peculiarity of the Apocalypse is not so much the use of symbols and emblems, as the profuse abundance of them.

My other remark is, that a symbolical style of composition will always seem more strange to us than it does to Oriental nations.* Figures, parables, illustrations, and similitudes, are infinitely better known in the countries round the Holy Land, than they are among ourselves. The hieroglyphic inscriptions, for example, which abound in Egypt and elsewhere in the East, are nothing more than symbolical writings. Who does not know that at first sight these hieroglyphics seem uncouth, meaningless, dark, and obscure? The first step the student of them must take, is to become familiar with their appearance. By and bye he may hope to become acquainted with the key to their meaning. Ultimately, that key being found, these very hiero-

* "The Symbolical or Hieroglyphical character is an art of communicating the conceptions of the mind by visible figures, which having a metaphorical relation or similitude, or at least, affinity to the conceptions, excite in others the same conceptions."—*Daubus on Revelation*. p. 6. 1720.

"The Hieroglyphical characters are like all kinds of animals and members of men, and working tools, especially those of carpenters. For their writing does not show the discourse about the subject matter by the composition of syllables, but by the emphasis of the figures."—*Diodorus Siculus*, quoted by *Daubus*. p. 8.

"From this way of writing arose a symbolical way of speaking too; the symbolical characters, which they were so conversant with, furnishing them continually with metaphors and other tropes, first in their mysterious or religious speeches, and from them easily passing on to the vulgar matters. Which kind of speech set up the priests and wiser sort of men above the level of the vulgar, because such a figurative and florid kind of speech and notions seemed to add great beauty to their thoughts, and distinguished that of wise men from the plain style of the rest. Thence it comes that most of the Oriental languages, especially that of the poets, affect this way."—*Daubus*. p. 8.

glyphics are found full of interesting matter. It is much the same with the Book of Revelation. It is a book of sacred hieroglyphics. Its very style is one to which our matter-of-fact northern mind is utterly unaccustomed. To us, therefore, its visions seem doubly strange,—strange because we are not familiar with such a mode of conveying our ideas,—stranger still, because in many cases we have no clue to their meaning. Our first step must be to read them and study them much, so as to become familiarised with their outward garb,—with the style of composition in which they are clothed. So studying in a prayerful spirit, we may hope that the meaning of their inward contents will be gradually made more plain to our minds.

One thing let us always remember in reading the visions of the Apocalypse. Whether we understand little or much, let us settle it in our minds as a *fixed* principle, that every vision in the book has a real definite meaning.

The time is short. We hasten on towards a day when every page shall be unfolded and unsealed. Every knot shall be untied. Every hard question shall be solved. Then shall we see that the Revelation, like every other part of the inspired volume, was all “very good.”

Then shall we find that the blessing pronounced on its students was not given in vain, and that those readers whom God blesses are blessed indeed.

II. Let us consider, in the next place, *the arguments commonly used to deter men from studying the Book of Revelation.*

There never have been wanting good men who have cried down the study of Revelation as unprofitable. They have spoken of it as a book too dark and mysterious for use. They have bid men respect it as inspired, but not touch it,—reverence it at a distance, as part of the Bible, but not draw near to it or handle its contents. To this prejudice we probably owe the unhappy omission of the book from the daily calendar of lessons in the Liturgy of the Church of England. It is deeply to be regretted, that in the last arrangement of that calendar the Apocryphal story of Bel and the Dragon should have been thrust in, and the Revelation of John the Divine should have been shut out. Room was made for an entirely uninspired composition. No place was found for a book to the reading of which a special blessing is promised. Truly we may say in this case, "Great men are not always wise, neither do the aged understand judgment." (Job xxxii. 9.) *

Reader, when such prejudices have existed against the study of the Book of Revelation among good men, you will not wonder that the children of the world should have gone further. Men, more witty than wise, have launched sharp sayings, jests, and jibes at its students. They have not been ashamed to find a mark for witticism in its solemn and mysterious visions. Even

* It is a curious fact that the fourth council of Toledo, held about the year 640, made the following decree, "Because there are many that do not receive the book of Apocalypse as authentic, and *scorn to* read it in the Church of God, if any one for the future shall refuse to receive it, or to read it in the Church, in the time of Mass, from Easter to Whitsuntide, he shall be excommunicated."

—*Cressener on Revelation*. 1690.

a man like Scaliger declared that one of Calvin's wisest acts was his abstaining from writing a commentary on the book. Dr. South, a clever writer, though an unsound theologian, said, that the study of Revelation either "found a man mad or made him so." *

But, after all, what is the real worth of the objections commonly made to the study of Revelation? Let us weigh them in the balance, and see to what they amount. To my own mind they appear neither so serious nor so unanswerable as is commonly supposed.

One class of objectors dislikes the book, because it seems to point to a coming state of things in the world, which, to their minds, is *monstrous, incredible, and improbable*.

That God should send plagues and judgments upon the nations of the earth, because of their sins against Him,—that the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the captains, and the rich, and the mighty, and the bond, and the free, should really flee to hide themselves from the wrath of the Lamb,—that the kingdoms of this world should really become the kingdoms of our God, and of His Christ,—that the saints of the Lord Jesus should ever reign upon the earth, and everything that defileth be cast out—all this is to their minds almost *absurd*. "It is contrary to their common sense," they

* "Voltaire was pleased to say, that Sir Isaac Newton wrote his comment on the Revelation, to console mankind for the great superiority he had over them in other respects. But Voltaire, though a very agreeable, is yet a very superficial writer, and often mistaken in his judgment of men and things."—*Bishop Newton on Prophecy*. 1764.

tell us. "It is a mark of a weak mind to believe it. It is extravagance. It is raving. It is enthusiasm. It is going back to the ranting of fifth-monarchy-men in the Commonwealth. It cannot be. We cannot shew them the details of the mode in which all these things shall come to pass. They will not believe them. A book from which we draw such strange fanatical opinions, can never be a profitable one to study."

I am not careful as to the answer to be given to such objectors. They would do well to remember that the great leading events yet to come, to which Revelation points, are in no wise more wonderful than many which have already taken place in the world. The destruction of the old world by the flood,—the wasting of Babylon, Nineveh, Tyre, and Egypt,—the scattering of the Jews, and their perpetual preservation, notwithstanding, as a separate people,—all these were things utterly improbable at the time when they were foretold. But we know that they all came to pass. And as it has been in days gone by, so it shall be in days to come. Men in their pride of heart, forget that in the eyes of an Eternal God the movements of the nations of the earth are but as the struggles of a few ephemeral insects. Yet a little time, and despotic and constitutional governments, liberal and conservative parties, all, all shall be swept away. God has said it, and with Him nothing is impossible.

As to the *manner* in which the great events predicted in Revelation shall be brought about, we do not pretend to explain it. There are many things which we accept as facts, and yet should find it impossible to explain.

We believe the creation of all things out of nothing. We believe the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. We believe the fact of the Incarnation. But who would dare to offer an explanation of any one of these great mysteries? We have a right to regard unfulfilled prophecy in the same light. We claim belief for its facts, though the mode of their accomplishment be at present hid from our eyes.

I leave this first class of objectors here. I fear the secret spring of their arguments, in too many cases, is the dislike of the natural heart to spiritual things. The heart not taught by the Holy Ghost rebels against the idea of severe judgments against sin,—a kingdom of Christ,—a reign of the saints. And why? The plain truth is, that it is not so much the Book of Revelation that such a heart really objects to, as the whole Gospel of Christ, and all the counsel of God.

Another class of objectors must next be noticed. These are they who deprecate the study of Revelation because of the wide *differences which prevail in the interpretation of its contents, and the notorious mistakes into which interpreters have fallen.*

I do not for a moment pretend to deny the existence of these differences and mistakes. Some good men tell us confidently that the whole book is entirely unfulfilled. They look for an accomplishment of its visions so clear and unmistakeable that there shall be no room left for doubt. Other good men assure us, with no less confidence, that the whole book is fulfilled, with the exception of a small portion at the end. A third school of expositors maintains that the Revelation is partly

fulfilled, and partly unfulfilled. As to the details of the book, the meaning and application of the several visions it contains, the fulfilment of times and seasons, time would fail if I were to recount the various interpretations that have been put forth, and the errors that have been committed.

Now, what shall we say to these things? What can the advocate for Apocalyptic study reply to these undeniable facts?

My reply is, that the variations and mistakes in the views of interpreters constitute no argument against the study of the book itself. Because others have missed the road in searching for truth, you and I are not to give up the search altogether, and sit down in contented ignorance. Who has not heard of the extravagant and contradictory theories which astronomers, geologists, and physicians have occasionally propounded in their respective sciences? Yet who would think of giving up astronomy, geology, or medicine in despair, because of the conflicting tenets and avowed mistakes of their professors? Luther and Zwingli differed widely about the Lord's Supper. Cranmer and Hooper differed widely about vestments. Wesley and Toplady differed widely on predestination. Yet no one in his senses would think of giving up the study of the Christian system, because these good men could not agree.

My answer furthermore is, that the very mistakes and differences of Apocalyptic interpreters are not without their use. They have cleared the field in many a direction, and shewn us what the Revelation does *not* mean. Expositors have shewn in many cases the

weakness of other men's interpretations, if they have not succeeded in establishing their own. To know what an unfulfilled Scriptural prediction does *not* mean is one step towards knowing what it *does*. When Napoleon was overtaken by the rising tide, in a dark evening, on the sandy shore of the Red Sea, he is said to have ordered his attendants to disperse, and ride in different directions,—charging each one to report, as he proceeded, whether the water grew shallower or deeper. There was great wisdom in that order. Each man's report was useful. The report of him who found the water deepening was in its way as useful as the report of the successful finder of the right path. It is much the same with the widely-varying expositions of Revelation. It is evident that many of them must be wrong. But all in their way have done good. There is hardly one, perhaps, which has not contributed some sparks of light.*

My answer beside this is, that the differences of Apocalyptic interpreters, great as they undoubtedly are, are often magnified and absurdly exaggerated. The common points of agreement among expositors are more in number, and greater in importance, than men commonly suppose. Whether the seals, trumpets, and vials, are fulfilled or not, all students of the Revelation agree that there are judgments predicted in it on the unconverted and unbelieving. Whether days mean literal days, as some say, or years, as others say, all are agreed

* "Among the interpreters of Revelation in the last ages, there is scarce one of note, who hath not made some discovery worth knowing."—*Sir Isaac Newton on the Apocalypse. Chap. 1. p. 263.*

that the time of the wicked triumphing is defined, limited, and fixed by the counsels of God. Whether the beast with horns like a lamb be the Papal power or not, nearly all are agreed that Romish apostacy is foretold in the book, and doomed. Whether Christ shall come and reign *visibly* on earth or not, for one thousand or three hundred and sixty-five thousand years, all are agreed that He shall come again with power and great glory, that the kingdoms of this world shall sooner or later become the kingdoms of our God, and of His Christ, and that all believers should look and long for their Lord's return. I doubt much whether this is as much considered by the opponents of Apocalyptic study as it deserves.

I grant them freely that the divergences and contrarieties of the paths drawn out by the expositors of the book are very many, and very great. But, I bid them remember that the great terminus towards which all their lines lead is always one and the same. Oh! that men would remember that mighty terminus, and realize the tremendous importance of the end and breaking up of all things towards which they hasten. Then would they be more anxious to study any book which handles matters like those contained in Revelation. Then would they be less ready to catch at any excuse for declining Apocalyptic study.

The only remaining objection to the study of Revelation which I shall notice, is that which is drawn from *the mysterious character of a large portion of the book.*

That the Revelation is full of dark and difficult things it is of course impossible to deny. Some of its symbols

and emblems the Spirit of God has thought good to interpret and explain. The seven stars,—the seven candlesticks,—the incense,—the fine linen,—the waters on which the woman sat,—the woman herself,—all these, and a few more, are expounded, perhaps as a specimen of the kind of meaning which should be attached to the symbols of the book generally. But, after every deduction, there remain a very large number of visions and emblems which the Spirit has not thought fit to interpret. These symbols are unquestionably dark and mysterious. It is not, perhaps, saying too much to admit, that after all the attempts of commentators, ancient and modern,—preterist and futurist,—there are many visions and symbols of Revelation which, we must confess, we do not understand. I do not say that elaborate and learned expositions of them have not been offered, but not expositions so manifestly satisfactory that we can demand a reader's assent to them. If truth be spoken, we must allow that all the expositions of *some parts* of the Revelation are nothing better than ingenious conjectures. We admire them as we read. We are not prepared to say that they are not true, or to furnish a reason for refusing our assent. But still they fail to carry conviction with them. We somehow feel the mark is not yet hit, the spring of the lock is not yet touched, the truth is not yet discovered.

But I appeal to the common sense of men, and their sense of fairness, and I ask them whether they have a right to expect that such a book as the book of Revelation, can, in the very nature of things, be anything but dark and mysterious?

Here is a prophetic book which spans the mighty gulf between the end of the first century and the last judgment,—a book which was given to shew God's dealings with the Church and the world during a space of well nigh two thousand years,—a book which points to the rise and fall of empires and kingdoms, with all the attendant wars and tumults over a third part of the habitable globe,—a book, above all, which does not tell its story in simple, plain, matter-of-fact narration, but clothes it in majestic visions, symbols, emblems, figures, and similitudes.

Here are we reading this book during a life of three score and ten years at most,—with all the cares and anxieties of this world pressing upon us,—with an understanding partaking in the corruption of the fall,—with a heart naturally earthly and sensual, and, even after conversion, weak and deceitful,—knowing little of ourselves,—knowing little of cotemporary history,—finding constantly how hard it is to discover the real truth about events happening in our own day. Is it likely, I ask,—is it probable,—is it agreeable to common sense, that such students, coming to such a book, should find it anything but mysterious, and hard to understand? Can any one doubt as to the reply?

The plain truth is, that we are like children watching some mighty building in process of erection. They see a thousand operations, which they are utterly unable to explain or comprehend. They see scaffolding, and stones, and iron, and brick, and mortar, and timber, and rubbish. They hear noise, and hammering, and cutting, and chipping. It seems to their eyes a vast scene of

hopeless confusion. And yet to the eye of the architect all is order, system, and progress. He sees the end from the beginning. He knows exactly what is going on.

It is much the same with us in trying to pass a judgment on the application of many of the Apocalyptic visions. We are like those who stand on the outward surface of a sphere. The range of our mental vision is exceedingly limited. We know so little, and see so little, beyond our own circle,—the very pages of history are so often full of inaccuracies and lies, that we are really very poor judges of the question, whether such and such visions have been fulfilled or no. More light, I firmly believe, may yet be expected before the end come. Much may probably be yet unfolded and unsealed. But as to any certainty about the meaning of *all* parts of the Apocalypse, when I see how little certainty there is about anything a thousand miles from us in distance, or a hundred years in time, I own I do not look for it until the Lord comes.

And here let me turn for a moment to those who secretly wonder *why the Book of Revelation was not written more plainly*, and why things of such vast interest to the Church, have been purposely clothed in the mysterious garb of symbol, allegory, and vision.

I might easily remind such persons of Bishop Sherlock's remark on this very point:—"To inquire why the ancient prophecies are not clearer, is like inquiring why God has not given us more reason, or made us as wise as the angels." But I have no wish to leave them there. I would rather use an argument which has often proved satisfactory to my own mind,

and silenced the speculative questionings of a curious spirit.

I ask you then, whether you cannot see wisdom and mercy in the darkness which it has pleased God to throw around the prophetic history of His Church? You wonder in your own heart, why the things to come were not more clearly revealed. But, consider for a moment how fearfully deadening and depressing it would have been to the early Christians, if they had clearly seen the long ages of darkness and corruption which were to elapse before the Lord returned. Reflect for a moment how much unhappiness primitive believers were spared, by not knowing for certain the events which were to take place. If humble saints in the days of imperial persecution could have dreamed of the eighteen weary centuries, during which the saints were yet to wait for their Lord from heaven, they might almost have sat down in flat despair. If Polycarp had foreseen the present state of Asia Minor,—or Ignatius that of Syria,—or Chrysostom that of Constantinople,—or Irenæus that of France,—or Athanasius that of Egypt,—or Augustine that of Africa,—their hands might well have trembled, and their knees waxed faint.

Count up, I say, the dark and painful pages of which there are so many in the annals of Church history. Set down in order the heresies, and false doctrines, and apostacies, of which there has been such a rank growth,—Arianism, and Romanism, and Socinianism, and Neologianism, and their kindred errors. Place before your mind's eye the centuries of ignorance and superstition before the Reformation, and of coldness and

formality since Luther's generation passed away. Count up the crimes which have been perpetrated in the name of Christianity,—the massacres, the burnings, the persecutions within the Church,—not forgetting the Valenses, the Albigenses, the Spanish Inquisition, the slaughter of the Huguenots, and the fires of Smithfield. Do all this faithfully, and I think you will hardly avoid the conclusion, that it was wise mercy which drew so thick a veil over things to come. Wise mercy shewed the early Christians a light in the distance, but did not tell them how far it was away. Wise mercy pointed out the far off harbour lights, but not the miles of stormy sea between. Wise mercy revealed enough to make them work, and hope, and wait. But wise mercy did not tell all that was yet to be fulfilled before the end.

Who thinks of telling his little children in their early years, every trial, and pain, and misery which they may have to go through before they die? Who thinks of filling their tender ears with the particulars of every bodily disease they may have to endure, and every struggle for success in life in which they may have to engage? Who think of harrowing up their young souls by describing every bereavement they may have to submit to, or dilating on every death-bed they may have to watch? We do not do it, because they could not understand our meaning, and could not bear the thought of it if they did. And just so, it seems to me, does the Lord Jesus deal with His people in the Apocalyptic visions. He keeps back the full revelation of all the way they must go through till the time when

He sees they can bear it. He considers our frame. He teaches and reveals as we are able to bear.

After all, there is no argument in reply to those who object to the study of Revelation so powerful as the simple promise of the Word of God. The predictions of Revelation may seem to many improbable and absurd. The differences and mistakes of interpreters may fill others with disgust and dislike to the very name of Apocalyptic study. The acknowledged mysteriousness, and confessed difficulties of the book, may incline many to shrink from perusing it. But there the book stands, —part of those Scriptures which are all given by inspiration, and all profitable. And there on the forefront of the book stands a promise and an encouragement to the reader and hearer: "*Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear.*" These words, no doubt, were spoken in foresight of the objections that men would raise against the study of the book. Give these words their full weight. Fall back on them when all other arguments fail. They are a reserve which will never give way. God has said it, and will make it good. "*Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy of this book.*"

III. The third and last thing which I now wish to consider is *the number of useful lessons which the Book of Revelation is calculated to teach.*

I am anxious to impress this point on your attention. I want you to establish it in your mind as a settled thing, that the Book of Revelation is an eminently profitable book for every reader of the Bible to study.

It is a fountain to which the poorest and most unlearned shall never go in vain.

I say, then, that there are many blessed and comfortable truths scattered up and down, all over the Book of Revelation, which are intelligible to the simplest comprehension, and yet full of food for the most spiritual mind. God has mercifully so ordered the composition of the book, that there is hardly a chapter from which a man may not draw some striking and edifying thought. He may be unskilful in the interpretation of visions. He may have no idea of the meaning of seals, or trumpets, or vials,—of the two witnesses,—of the woman fleeing into the wilderness,—of the first or second beasts. But still, if he perseveres in humble, prayerful study of the whole book, he shall find in almost every page verses which shall richly repay his pains. They shall shine out on him like stars in the dark vault of heaven in a moonless night. They shall refresh him like an Oasis in the wilderness, and make it impossible for him to say, "All is barren." They shall sparkle like precious stones on the shore, as he walks by the deep waters of the mysterious book, and make him feel that his journey in search of treasure is not in vain.*

Let me select a few examples, in order to show what I mean.

* "It is true, many things in the Book of Revelation are obscure, and it is likely that the full clearing of them is not to be expected till God in some singular way shall open them up. Yet there are many clear, edifying, and comfortable passages of God's mind in it, the Holy Ghost mixing them to be fed upon, to sweeten those passages that are more obscure, and to encourage the reader to search for the meaning of them."—*Durham on Revelation*.—1658.

There is much about *the Lord Jesus Christ* in Revelation. There are names, and titles, and expressions about Him there, which we find nowhere else. There is new light thrown on His offices, His power, His care for His people. Surely this alone is no small matter. To know Jesus is life eternal. To abide in Jesus is to be fruitful. If we are indeed born of the Spirit, we can never hear too much about our Saviour, our Shepherd, our High Priest, and Physician. If our hearts are right in the sight of God, we can never hear too much about our King. Like snow in summer, and good news from a far country, so are any fresh tidings about Christ.

There is much about the desperate *corruption of human nature* in Revelation. There is evidence on this subject in the Epistles to the Seven Churches, and the repeated accounts of the incorrigibleness and impenitence of the nations of the earth under judgments, which we shall all do well to lay to heart. We can never be too well acquainted with our own sinfulness and weakness. The spring of all humility, thankfulness, grateful love to Christ, close walk with God, is a real, thorough, scriptural knowledge of the wickedness of our own hearts. None will ever build high who does not begin low. The soul that loves much is the soul which feels that its debt is great, and that much has been forgiven.

There is much about *hell* in Revelation. There are many fearful expressions which shew its reality, its misery, its eternity, its certainty. How deeply important is it to have clear views on this solemn subject in the present day! A disposition appears in some quarters to shrink from asserting the eternity of punishment. A

flood of that miserable heresy, universalism, seems coming in upon us. Amiable and well-meaning enthusiasts are speaking smooth things about the love of God being beneath hell, and the mercy of God excluding the exercise of all His other attributes of justice and holiness. Tender-hearted women and intellectual men are catching at the theory that, after all, there is hope in the far distance for everybody, and that Satan's old assertion deserves credit, "Ye shall not surely die." Oh! reader, beware of this delusion. Be not wise above that which is written. Believe me, it is a great thing to believe in the reality of hell. Study the Apocalyptic visions well, and you will find it hard to disbelieve it.

There is much about *heaven* in Revelation. I speak of heaven in the common acceptation of the word. I mean the future abode of the saints and people of God. And I say that no book in God's Word tells us so much about heaven as the Apocalypse. If there was nothing else to be learned from the book beside this, we ought to be most thankful. Where is there a believer in the Lord Jesus who does not frequently think on the world to come and the resurrection state? Who that has lost a dear friend or relation, who died in the Lord, can abstain from meditating on the life of glory, and the place of meeting? Who among the people of God does not frequently reach forward in imagination into that unknown and unvisited abode, and strive to picture to his mind's eye the manner of the place and its employments? It is mysterious, no doubt. But nowhere is the veil so much lifted up as it is in the Book of Revelation.

There is much about the *prospects of the Church of Christ* in the Revelation. When I speak of the Church I mean the Church of the elect, the living body of Christ, whose members are all holy. The pages of the Apocalypse shew plainly that the triumphs, and rest, and ease, and peace of that Church are not in this world. Its members must make up their minds to battles and fightings, to trial and persecution, to cross and affliction. They must be content to be a little flock, a poor and despised people, until the advent of Christ. Their good things are yet to come. Well would it be for believers if they would learn from Revelation to moderate their expectations from missions, schools, and all other ecclesiastical machinery. Then should we not hear so often as we now do, of disappointment, and despondency, and depression among true Christians, and especially among ministers. We live in the time when God is taking out a people. These are the days of election, but not of universal conversion. We are yet in the wilderness. The bridegroom is not yet with us. The days of absence, and mourning, and separation are not yet past and gone.

There is much in Revelation to shew the *folly of depending entirely on the powers of this world* for the advancement of true religion. There is much to shew that believers should not look to kings, and princes, and rich men, and great men, for the bringing in and support of the kingdom of Christ. The times are not yet come when kings shall literally be the nursing fathers of the Churches. It is striking to observe how often the Apocalypse speaks of them as the enemies of God's cause, and not the friends. We need this

lesson here in England. With a settled conviction that the principle of an Established Church is scriptural and sound, I still feel we need reminding that alliance with the powers that be has its disadvantages as well as its advantages to the visible Church of Christ. It is apt to engender indolence, apathy, and formality among professing Christians. I firmly believe that the Church of England would have exerted itself more, and done more for the world, if its members had been more familiar with the Book of Revelation, and learned from it to expect little from the State.

There is much in Revelation to shew the painful *childishness of the vast majority of true Christians* all over the world. Here we are, the greater part of us, scrambling and wrangling about the merest trifles,—contending about forms, and ceremonies, and outward matters of man's devising, as if they were the essentials of Christianity,—talking of order, and precedent, and custom, and routine, while millions of heathen are perishing for lack of knowledge, and myriads of our countrymen are dying as ignorant as the heathen around our own doors. And all this time the eternal purposes of God are rolling on to fulfilment—the kingdoms of this world are on the brink of dissolution—the day of judgment is at hand, and an hour draws nigh when Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, Congregationalism, and establishments, and voluntary Churches shall be clean swept out of the way, and nothing but grace, faith, and heart-holiness shall abide and stand the fire. Never, never do I, for one, read the Apocalypse without feeling the excessive littleness of Christians. We are like

children busy with our little houses of sand at low water by the sea side. The tide is rising. Our houses will soon be gone. Happy shall we be if we ourselves escape with our lives.

There is much, in the last place, in Revelation, to shew *the safety of all true believers in Christ*, whatever may come upon the world. Awful as are the woes of which the Apocalypse speaks, there is not a syllable to shew that a hair shall fall from the head of any one of God's children. Hid, like Noah in the ark—plucked, like Lot, from the fiery judgment—withdrawn, like Elijah, from the reach of their enemies—rescued, like Rahab, from the ruin of all around—they at last may read the Revelation without being afraid. The book that looks dark and threatening to the world, speaks no terrors to them. Like the wondrous pillar of cloud at Pi-hahiroth, (Exod. xiv.) it may fill the mind of an ungodly man with gloom, but like the same cloud it shall give light by night to the people of God.

Reader, what shall we say to these things? I have mentioned eight things which stand forth plainly and unmistakeably in the Book of Revelation. There is no mystery about them. They require no deep learning to understand. A humble mind and a prayerful heart will not fail to discover them.

These are the kind of things which we can never know too well. The offices of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself—the corruption of man—the reality of hell—the nature of heaven—the prospects of the Church—the folly of trusting in princes—the childishness of God's people—the safety of believers in the day of

wrath—these are the kind of subjects with which we cannot be too familiar. These are the plain lessons which, with all its many difficulties, Revelation will unfold. Verily, if these things are engraven deeply on our minds, our reading of the Apocalypse will be blessed indeed.

These are the kind of things from which Satan labours hard to turn us away. Well may that old enemy fill men's minds with prejudice against Apocalyptic study. Well may he suggest the evil thought, "it is all mysterious, it is all too deep, we need not read it." Let us resist him in this matter. Let us cleave to Revelation more closely every year. Let us never doubt that it is a profitable study for our souls.

It only remains now to conclude this tract with three practical remarks.—

1. For one thing, let us thank God that *the things needful to salvation are all clear, plain, and devoid of mystery to a humble mind*. Whatever difficulties there may be in the visions of the Apocalypse, the most unlearned reader of the Bible shall never miss the way to heaven, if he seeks to find it in a childlike and prayerful spirit.

The guilt, and corruption, and weakness of man, are not a hidden thing like a seal, a trumpet, or a vial.

Christ's power and willingness to save, and justification by faith in Him, are not a dark thing like the number 666.

The absolute necessity of a new birth and a thorough change of heart is not an uncertainty, like the meaning of the two witnesses.

The impossibility of salvation without meetness for heaven is not a mystery, like the interpretation of the vision of the four living creatures.

But, reader, remember, while you thank God for this clear teaching in the things essential to salvation, that this very clearness increases your personal responsibility. Take heed, lest, an open door being set before you, any of you should fail to enter in by it and be saved.

Hearken, every one into whose hands this tract may come, and understand. I give you a plain warning this day. Do not forget it. You may reach heaven without knowing much about the deep things of the Apocalypse, but you will never get there without the saving knowledge of Christ, and a new heart. You must be born again. You must renounce your own righteousness, and acknowledge yourself a sinner. You must wash in the fountain of Christ's blood. You must be clothed in the garment of Christ's righteousness. You must take up the cross of Christ and follow Him.

These are the things *absolutely needful*. These are the things without which no man, learned or unlearned, high or low, can ever be saved.

Rest not, rest not till you *know these things by experience*. Without them you may know the whole list of Apocalyptic commentaries,—be familiar with all that Mede, and Brightman, and Cressener, and Daubuz, and Durham, and Cuninghame, and Woodhouse, and Elliot, have written on the subject, and yet rise at the last day a lost soul,—knowing much intellectually, like the devils, but, like the devils, ruined for ever.

2. For another thing, let me entreat all students of the Book of Revelation, *to beware of dogmatism and positiveness* in expressing and maintaining their views of the meaning of its more mysterious portions.

Nothing, I firmly believe, has brought more discredit on the study of prophecy, than the excessive rashness and overweening confidence, with which many of its advocates have asserted the correctness of their own interpretations, and impugned the expositions of others. Too many have written and talked as if they had a special revelation from heaven, and as if it was impossible for any one to maintain a character for common sense, if he did not see with their eyes.*

Let us all watch our hearts, and be on our guard against this spirit. Dogmatism is a great trap which Satan lays in men's way, when he cannot prevent them studying the Apocalypse. Let us not fall into it. Let us rather pray for a spirit of modesty and humility in offering our solutions of the deep things of symbolical prediction. Let us allow that we may possibly be wrong, and that others may possibly be right. Believe me, we all need this caution. We are unhappily

* "Joseph Mede, the most learned and able interpreter of prophecy that this country can name among its divines, was remarkable for his modesty and humility. In a letter of his to Dr. Twiss, speaking of the leisurely and deliberate progress he made in his exposition of Apocalypse, chap. 14, he adds these words, 'I am by nature dilatory in all things, but in this let no man blame me, if I take more pause than ordinary; for it has sunk deeply into my mind, that rashly to be the author of a false interpretation of Scripture is to take God's name in vain in a high degree.'"—*Mede's Works*. 1672.

prone to be *most* positive when we have *least* warrant for our assertions, simply because our pride whispers that our credit for discernment is at stake, and that having made statements mainly on the authority of our own judgment, we are specially bound to defend them.

Happy is that student of prophecy, who is willing to confess that there are many things of which he is yet ignorant. Happier still, and more uncommon too, is he who is able to use those three hardest words in the English language, "I was mistaken."

3. Finally, let all believers take comfort in the thought that *the end to which all things are coming is clear, plain, and unmistakable*. There may yet be judgments in store for the world, of which we know nothing. There may be "distress of nations with perplexity," far exceeding anything we have yet heard of, read, or seen. There may be more grievous wars, and famines, and pestilences, and persecutions yet to come.

But the end is sure. Yet a little while, and He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. The kings of the earth may struggle and contend for their own worldly interests; but sooner or later the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God, and of His Christ. There shall be an eternal peace. He shall come and take possession whose right it is. The dominion and power shall be given to the saints of the Most High, and of the increase of their peace shall be no end.

Oh! that we may all remember this. In patience let us possess our souls, and in every trying time do as Luther did,—repeat the forty-sixth Psalm:—

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

"Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

"Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

"There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most high.

"God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.

"The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved; he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

"The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

"Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

"He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

"Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

"The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah."

Seeking the Lord Early.

PROVERBS VIII. 17.

"I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me."

Dear Children,

I am going to talk to you about Jesus Christ, and your souls.

I want to make you happy. But I know that people are never really happy unless their *souls* are happy; and I am sure that people's souls cannot be happy, unless they love Jesus Christ. And that is the reason why I am going to preach to you now: I want to tell you something about Jesus Christ and your souls.

Dear children, I hope you will all attend, while I talk to you. I pray that the Spirit of God may come into your hearts, and make you able to do so. Try to listen to me. Try to understand what I say. Try to remember and carry away something in your minds. I wish to do you all a great deal of good. Do not forget I am preaching to you,—not to the grown up people,—but to you, only to you.

Now just think what a pleasant text we have got here. It is said,—“I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.”

These are sweet words indeed; and who do you think says them? They are said by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. He is called "Wisdom" in this chapter. But we know it means Jesus Christ, for there are things said about wisdom in this chapter which cannot be said truly about any one but Jesus Christ Himself.

Come now and let us see what Jesus Christ says. —Listen, dear children, for this is very important.

I. He tells us,—“I love them that love me.” Now what can we make out of this?

First of all, do you not think it is very pleasant to hear that there are people whom Jesus Christ *loves*? You know we all like to be loved in this world. Only think how disagreeable it would be for you and me, if there was nobody alive who loved us. Suppose that no man or woman cared a bit for us,—suppose that everybody neglected us, and left us alone; what should we do? We should be wretched and miserable and unhappy! I am sure we all like to be loved.

Well then, just consider what a blessed thing it must be to be loved by Jesus Christ,—by the Son of God Himself.

You know that sometimes people love us in this world, and yet can do nothing for us. Your dear fathers and mothers love you, but perhaps they are poor, and cannot buy what you want; or perhaps they are sick, and very old, and can do nothing to help you.

But, dear children, these are things that can never happen to Jesus Christ, and I will tell you why.

Jesus Christ *is very great*. He is King of kings, and Lord of lords. He is Maker of all things. He is God Himself. He is Almighty. He is able to do anything whatsoever that He likes.

Oh! what a thing it must be to be loved by Jesus Christ!

And again, Jesus Christ *is very rich*. He has got everything to give away which you can want, either for soul or body. He keeps the keys of heaven. He has got an endless store of blessings in His treasure house, far more than I could describe.

Oh! what a thing it must be to be loved by Jesus Christ!

And again, Jesus Christ *is very good*. He never refuses any one who asks Him favours in a proper way. He was never known to say No! to any person who made a prayer to Him with a meek and humble heart.

Oh! what a thing it must be to be loved by Jesus Christ!

Dear Children, consider these things. Do you want a *great* friend,—Do you want a *rich* friend,—Do you want a *kind* friend? Is this the sort of friend you would like? Then be sure there is no friend in all the world like Jesus Christ. There is no love so well worth having as the love of Jesus Christ.

Blessed and happy are they whom Jesus Christ loves. I could not tell you a tenth part of all the great things He does for their souls.

He *pardons all their sins*. He forgives all the bad things they do. He washes them in His own blood, and makes them whiter than snow; so that not a spot re-

mains. Dear Children, I think that is just what you and I want. We have all sinned many, many sins.

Besides, *He gives them power to become good.* He puts His Spirit in their hearts, and makes them love God's ways, and like to walk in them. Dear Children, that too is just the thing you and I want. We have very bad, wicked hearts, by nature. We never love God's ways of ourselves.

Besides this, *He takes care that none whom He loves shall be lost.* He keeps them as a shepherd keeps his sheep. He will not allow either wicked men or the devil to destroy their souls. Dear Children, that too is just what you and I want. We are all very weak, foolish creatures. We should never be safe, if left to ourselves.

And lastly, *He is getting ready a place in heaven for those whom He loves.* He has a glorious house for them there, far away from sin, and sorrow, and trouble. Dear Children, that too is good news for you and me. Is it not pleasant to think He has prepared a home for us, so that whenever we leave this world we shall go to a place of peace and rest?

All these things the Lord Jesus Christ does for those whom He loves. Only look at them! What mighty things, what glorious things they are! He cleanses them from all their sins. He gives them power to be good. He takes care they are not lost. He gets ready a house for them in heaven.

Dear Children, this is love indeed. This is love worth having. Did I not tell you truly, there is nothing in all the world to be compared to Christ's love? There is nothing like being loved by Jesus Christ.

II. But let us see next who are those that Jesus Christ loves. He tells us in our text. He says, "I love those that love me."

Now, how shall we know whether we love Jesus Christ or not? This is indeed an important question. Are there no marks or signs, perhaps you will say, by which those who love Him may be found out? Yes! dear Children, I think there are; and what those marks and signs are, I shall now try to show you.

Remember then, for one thing, *those who love Jesus Christ, believe whatever He says in the Bible.*

The Bible says we are all sinners, lost, perishing sinners,—full of wickedness and deceit,—deserving of nothing but God's anger. Many people cannot quite believe this. They cannot bring themselves to think they are so bad. They dislike to be told of it. Not so those who love Jesus Christ,—they believe it all. They are ready to say, it is true, true, quite true.

Again, the Bible tells us, we must come to Christ, and trust only in Him, if we would be saved. It says that nothing but His blood can wash away our sins, that it is only for His sake that any one can be forgiven. Many people will not believe this either. They cannot think their own goodness will not help to get them to heaven. But those who love Jesus Christ believe it all. They take the Lord at His word. They leave off trusting in their own goodness, and are ready to say, "None but Christ, none but Christ is my hope."

Dear Children, no one can love Jesus Christ who does not believe what He says. Think what a sad thing it would be if you and I could not get our relations to

believe us. Only fancy how hard and unkind it would seem if they were to say, "We do not depend at all on what you tell us, we cannot trust your word." I am sure we should suppose they no longer loved us. This, then, is one mark of those who love Jesus Christ,—they never doubt what He tells them, they believe every word.

Remember, for another thing, *those who love Jesus Christ try to please Him*. You know when you love people in this world, you try to please them. You try to do what they bid you, and to behave as they wish you, and to remember what they teach you, and to mind what they tell you,—and why do you do so? Because you love them.

And besides this, you try and please them, not only before their faces when they can see you, but also when they are gone away, and out of sight. True love makes you always think, "What would my dear friends like me to do." If your father and mother found you doing naughty things,—doing what they told you not to do, might they not well say, "Child, child, I am afraid you do not really love me?" Yes, indeed they might. True love will always cause true obedience, and the Bible says, "Even a child is known by his doings." (Prov. xx. 11.)

Now, dear Children, just as you try to please your friends, if you love them, so do those who love Jesus Christ try to please Him. They are always trying to do His will, to keep His laws, to live after His commandments, to obey His precepts. They do not think any of Christ's commands grievous. They never say

that His laws are hard, strict, and disagreeable. It is their delight to walk in His paths.

Dear Children, no man, or woman, or child can really love Jesus Christ, if they do not try to obey Him. "Ye are my friends," He says, "if ye do whatsoever I command you."

This, then, is another sure mark of those who love Jesus Christ,—they try in all things to please Him.

Now we have got through one part of our text. Sit still and think for a moment about what you have heard. Each of you ask your own heart this little question,—"*Do I love Jesus Christ or not? Do I believe what He says, and do I try to please Him?*" Those who can answer, "Yes," are the children He especially loves. Oh! remember what He says, "I love those that love me."

III. But let us look next to the other part of our text, and see what we may learn from it. I really think this part is almost as pleasant as the first, for it contains a sweet promise,—"*Those that seek me early shall find me.*"

Dear Children, how are you and I to seek Jesus Christ? He does not live upon earth like one of us. We cannot see Him with our eyes. We cannot reach Him and take hold of Him with our hands. And yet he says, "those that seek me shall find me." What can this mean? Let me try to tell you.

First of all you *must seek Jesus Christ in His own Book*. The Bible is Jesus Christ's Book, and all who want to know Him must be very diligent in reading their Bibles.

He says to every one of you, "Search the Scriptures," and He will give the Holy Spirit to those who seek Him in the Scriptures, and teach them all about Himself.

Dear Children, be regular readers of the Bible all your lives. Let the word dwell in you richly, and then you will be truly wise. Read it daily, read a great deal of it, try and remember it, learn texts by heart. I remember a little girl in my first parish, who could learn seventy verses of the Bible in a week. How pleasant it is to find the Apostle Paul reminding Timothy, that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures. Now why should not all of you be like Timothy in this? I should like to hear that you were all Bible-reading children,—children who read the Bible at home as well as at school.

This, then, is one way to seek Jesus Christ. You must seek Him in the Bible.

Secondly *you must seek Jesus Christ in His own house.* Jesus Christ has many houses in this country, where people meet together to pray to Him, and to hear about Him. This Church is one of them. And wherever two or three are gathered together in Jesus Christ's name, the Lord Himself is really present, though we cannot see Him with our eyes.

Dear Children, I hope you will all regularly go to Jesus Christ's house as long as you live. I hope you will never do like those foolish people who keep away from it. Oh! what sad harm they are doing to their poor souls!

And when you go, try to attend to all you hear, and to get good from it. Do not stare about, and make a noise, or talk to other children, but listen well to all

that is read or preached. Jesus Christ is there, and sees how you behave. He loves to see little children coming to His house, and behaving well. If you persevere in so doing, you may be sure He will put His Spirit in you and fill you with all knowledge.

This, then, is another way to seek Jesus Christ. You must seek Him in His house.

Thirdly *you must seek Jesus Christ on your knees in prayer*. You must ask Him with your own mouth to give you every thing that your soul wants. You must ask Him to cleanse you from all your sins in His blood,—to give you His Spirit,—to make you good, obedient, gentle, kind, truth-speaking children,—to keep you from being selfish, idle, greedy, passionate, cunning, or ill-tempered. You must tell Him all you are afraid of, and all you feel, and all you wish to have for your soul. This is prayer.

And you need not be afraid of Him at all when you pray. He would like you to tell Him all in your own simple way, just as you tell your own mothers when you want anything. He loves children very much. He was once much displeased with His disciples, because they prevented people bringing their children to Him, and he said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." And He is just the same now that He was then.

Dear Children, I should like you all to be praying children,—children who tell the Lord all your wants, and are not afraid to speak to Him. Prayer is the surest way to seek Him, and without prayer your souls will never prosper.

Never mind if your prayers seem very poor and weak. Only let them come from your hearts, and the Lord hears them.

The Lord Jesus hears every prayer that is prayed to Him in earnest. The least prayer of a little child on earth is loud enough to be heard plainly in heaven above. Heaven seems to be a long way off, but you may be sure the very moment the prayer is spoken it is heard there. A little key will often open a great door. Prayer is a little key of that sort. It can open the door of heaven, and take you up to the very throne of God Himself. Blessed are they who delight in prayer, and call much upon God.

This, then, is the third way to seek the Lord Jesus Christ, you must seek Him in prayer.

Dear Children, I have told you how to seek the Lord. Ask yourselves, each one of you, before you go any further, Do I really seek Him?

IV. But our text tells us something about those who seek Jesus Christ, and what is it? It says they "shall find him."

The Lord promises "they that seek me shall find me." How sweet it is to hear that. Think how disagreeable it would be to seek and seek all our lives, and have our trouble for nothing, and never find Him. But the Lord says, "*they shall find me.*"

Now I want to tell you what this "finding" means. We shall not see Him with our eyes, for He is sitting at God's right hand in heaven, and not on earth, and yet we are told we shall find Him. How can this be? Let me tell you.

You will find the Lord's presence in your own hearts and minds. You will feel something within you, as if the Lord Jesus Christ was sitting by you, and taking care of you, and putting His arm round you, and smiling upon you, and speaking kindly to you. Just as a blind person feels brighter and happier when the sun is shining pleasantly upon him, though he cannot see it, so you and I, if we seek Jesus Christ in earnest, shall soon feel our hearts lighter and happier, and something within us will make us know that we have found Him.

Dear Children, it is sweet and comfortable indeed when we feel that we have really found Jesus Christ. Oh! that you may never give up seeking till you have found Him. You will find Him, I know, if you seek on, for He is not far off. He is very near every one of us, He is waiting for us to call upon Him.

When you have found Him, you will feel as if you had got a sure Friend in whom you can trust,—a Friend who will always love you, always watch over you, always take care of you, always be good to you, never fail you.

When you have found Him, you will feel as if you had got strength and power to walk in God's ways,—strength to keep yourself from bad words and bad company,—strength to do things which please God.

When you have found Him, you will feel as if you had got a pleasant Comforter living in your heart. You will be far more happy, and cheerful, and content, than you were before. Little things will not put you out as they used to do. You will not be afraid of sickness, or pain, or death.

Dear Children, how delightful it will be to feel all this. Try all of you, do try, to find Jesus Christ.

V. And now there is only one thing more in our text that I want to talk to you about. Only one little word. But that little word is so very important, that I dare not pass it over. It is the word "*early*." "They that seek me 'early,' the Lord Jesus Christ says, "they are those that shall find me."

Dear Children, that word "*early*" was meant particularly for yourselves. Seeking Jesus Christ early means seeking Jesus Christ when you are quite young, and that is just what I want you all to do.

Children, the Lord sends a message to you this very day by my mouth. He says He should like you to begin seeking Him at once.

Now do remember, all of you, you cannot begin seeking Jesus too soon.

Seeking early is the *safest way*. Children may be young and healthy; but no children are too young and healthy to die. For death is very strong,—he can soon make the healthiest of you pine away, and make your rosy cheeks pale and sickly. And death is very cruel,—he does not mind whom he takes away out of families, and he will not wait for any one to get ready; he will take you just when he pleases. I think quite as many young persons die as old ones. I see the names of quite as many young people as old on the grave stones. Children, you would not like to die without having sought the Lord at all! Oh! remember, seeking early is the safest way.

And then, besides this, seeking early is the *happiest way*. Surely if it is so pleasant to have Jesus Christ for a friend, the sooner you have Him for a friend the better. You cannot think how happily a child's life goes on when his ways please the Lord! Every thing seems bright and cheerful. Lessons seem more easy, and play seems more pleasant. Friends seem more kind, and trouble seems less troublesome. Every thing in life seems more smooth. Dear Children, I want you to enjoy all this. Then make haste and delay not to seek the Lord.

And last of all, seeking early is the *easiest way*. When you and I have got a great deal of work to do, you know there is nothing like beginning in good time. Now this is just what you should do about your souls; you should begin in good time to seek Him who alone can save them. People that have got work to do that must be finished before dark, take care to get up early in the morning. So should you do, dear children, in working about your souls. You should seek the Lord in the morning of life, and get your work done before the night of death cometh, when none can work. Every year you put it off you will find it harder work, more to be done, and less time to do it. Every year you will find your hearts more stubborn,—more unwilling to do what is right. Now they are like young trees, so soft and tender, that by the Lord's help you may bend them any way. In a few years they will be like strong thick trees, so tough and well rooted, that nothing but a mighty wind can shake them. Dear

children, begin to seek the Lord at once. I want you to have as few difficulties as possible in your journey to heaven.

Consider these things—consider these things well ; and begin early to seek the Lord. It is the *safest* way, the *happiest* way, the *easiest* way. Try to be like Obadiah, who feared the Lord from his youth. Try to be like our blessed Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who grew up “in favour with God and man.”

Think of the day when Jesus Christ shall come again to this world. He means to come again in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. He will come very suddenly, in an hour when no man thinketh ; like a thief in the night. He will gather together all who love Him, and take them home to His Father's house, to be for ever happy. He will leave behind all the idle and wicked, and unbelieving persons, who have not sought Him, to be wretched and miserable for ever. Dear Children, Jesus Christ might come very soon. We do not know how soon. How sad it would then be to see others taken up to heaven, and ourselves left behind ! How dreadful to feel “ I might have been taken up too, but I would not seek the Lord ! ”

Think too of the great day of judgment ; when all of us shall stand before God, and give account of our works. Some of the people who are saved, will say then, “ I never began to seek Jesus Christ till I was forty years old, and I wasted away more than half my life.” Others will say, “ I never began to seek Him till I was twenty, and I wasted many years of my life.”

But some will be able to say, "I sought the Lord when I was quite young—I can hardly remember the time when I did not try to love Him."

Dear Children, how pleasant it will be for those people to think this! How sweet to feel that they gave the first days of their lives as well as the last to Jesus Christ! How glorious they will appear who have loved their Saviour in the beginning of their time, as well as in the end. The Lord grant that many of you may be found among them. Oh! seek the Lord early, seek Him while He may be found.

And now, dear children, it is time for me to leave off and let you go. Perhaps I shall never see you all together again in this world,—indeed I am almost sure I shall not. But we shall all meet at the last day. I do hope you will think of what I have told you about Jesus Christ and your souls. Remember I want you all to be happy children, and in order to be happy you must love Jesus Christ.

Let me tell you before you go, who was the happiest child I ever saw.

She was a little girl whom I once met travelling in a railway carriage. We were both going on a journey to London, and we travelled a great many miles together. She was only eight years old, and she was quite blind. She had never been able to see at all. She had never seen the sun, and the stars, and the sky, and the grass, and the flowers, and the trees, and the birds—and all those pleasant things which you see every day of your lives—but still she was quite happy.

She was by herself, poor little thing. She had no

friends or relations to take care of her on the journey, and be good to her; but she was quite happy and content. She said when she got into the carriage, "Tell me how many people there are in the carriage, I am quite blind and can see nothing?" A gentleman asked her "If she was not afraid?" "No," she said, "I am not frightened. I have travelled before, and I trust in God, and people are always very good to me."

But I soon found out the reason why she was so happy; and what do you think it was? She loved Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ loved her;—she had sought Jesus Christ, and she had found Him.

I began to talk to her about the Bible, and I soon saw she knew a great deal of it. She went to a school where the mistress used to read the Bible to her. And she was a good girl, and had remembered what her mistress had read.

Dear children, you cannot think how many things in the Bible this poor little blind girl knew. I only wish that every grown up person in England knew as much as she did. But I must try and tell you some of them.

She talked to me about sin; how it first came into the world, when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, and how it was to be seen every where now. "Oh!" she said, "there are no really good people. The very best people in the world have many sins every day, and I am sure we all of us waste a great deal of time, if we do nothing else wrong.—Oh! we are all such sinners! their is nobody who has not sinned a great many sins"

And then she talked about Jesus Christ. She told me about the agony in the garden of Gethsemane—

about His sweating drops of blood—about the soldiers nailing Him to the cross—about the spear piercing His side, and blood and water coming out. “Oh!” she said, “how very good it was of Him to die for us, and such a cruel death! How good He was to suffer so for our sins!”

And then she talked about wicked people. She told me she was afraid there were a great many in the world, and it made her very unhappy to hear how many of her school fellows and acquaintances went on. “But,” she said, “I know the reason why they are so wicked; it is because they do not try to be good—they do not wish to be good—they do not ask Jesus to make them good.”

I asked her what part of the Bible she liked best. She told me she liked all the history of Jesus Christ, but the chapters she was most fond of were the three last chapters of the book of Revelation. I had got a Bible with me, and I took it out and read these chapters to her as we went along.

When I had done she began to talk about heaven. “Think,” she said, “how nice it will be to be there. —There will be no more sorrow, nor crying, nor tears. And then Jesus Christ will be there, for it says, ‘The Lamb is the light thereof,’ and we shall always be with Him; and beside this, there shall be no night there; they will need no candle nor light of the sun.”

Dear children, just think of this poor little blind girl. Think of her taking pleasure in talking of Jesus Christ. Think of her rejoicing in the account of heaven, where there shall be no sorrow nor night.

I have never seen her since. She went to her own home in London, and I do not know whether she is alive or not. But I hope she is yet alive, and I have no doubt Jesus Christ has taken good care of her.

Dear children, are you as happy and as cheerful as she was?

You are not blind, you have eyes and can run about and see everything, and go where you like, and read as much as you please to yourselves. But are you as happy as this poor little blind girl?

Oh! if you wish to be happy in this world, remember my advice to day.—Do as the little blind girl did.—“Love Jesus Christ, and He will love you.—Seek Him early and you shall find Him.”

Children Walking in Truth.

2 JOHN 4.

"I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth."

Beloved Children,

The book from which my text is taken, is the shortest in the Bible. Look at it, when you go home, and you will find it so. It has only thirteen verses. But, short as it is, it is full of important things, and I think the verse I have just read is one of them.

This book is an Epistle, or Letter, written by the Apostle John. He wrote it to a good Christian lady, whom he knew. This lady had children, and some of them were the children spoken of in the text.

It seems that John found some of this good lady's children at a place where he happened to go; and you see how well he found them behaving. He was able to write a good report of them to their mother, and that is the report of our text, "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth."

Now, dear children, there are only two things I want to tell you about out of this text. Some of you perhaps, are thinking this very minute, "What does walking in

truth mean?" Others, perhaps, are thinking, "Why did John rejoice so greatly?" I shall try to answer these two questions.

I. Firstly, I shall try to show you "*when can it be said that children walk in truth.*"

II. Secondly, I shall try to show you "*what were the reasons that made the Apostle John rejoice so greatly.*"

Dear children, let me ask you all one favour,—let me ask you all to try to *attend*. I shall not keep you long. Come then, and listen to what I have to tell you. May the Holy Spirit open all your hearts, and bless what I say.

I. I told you I would first try to show you this,—"*When can it be said that children walk in truth?*" Let me set about it at once.

What does "*walking*" mean here? You must not think it means walking on our feet, as you have walked here to-night. It means rather our way of behaving ourselves,—our way of living and going on. And shall I tell you why the Bible calls this "*walking?*" It calls it so, because a man's life is just like a journey. From the time of our birth to the time of our death, we are always travelling and moving on. Life is a journey from the cradle to the grave, and a person's manner of living is, on that account, often called his "*walk.*"

But what does "*walking in truth*" mean? It means walking in the ways of true Bible religion, and not in the bad ways of this evil world. The world, I am sorry to tell you, is full of false notions and untruths, and specially full of untruths about religion. They all come from our great enemy, the devil. The devil

deceived Adam and Eve in Eden, and made them sin, by telling them an untruth. He told them they should not die if they ate the forbidden fruit, and that was untrue. And the devil is always at the same work now. He is always trying to make men, and women, and children have false notions about God and about religion. He persuades them to believe that what is really evil is good, and what is really good is evil,—that God's service is not pleasant,—and that sin will do them no great harm. And, I grieve to say, vast numbers of people are deceived by him, and believe these untruths.

But those persons who walk in truth are very different. They pay no attention to the false notions there are in the world about religion. They follow the true way which God shows us in the Bible. Whatever others may do, their chief desire is to please God, and be His true servants. Now this was the character of the children spoken of in the text.—John writes home to their mother, and says, "I found them walking in truth."

Dear children, would you not like to know whether you are walking in truth yourselves? Would you not like to know the *marks* by which you may find it out? Listen, every one of you, while I try to set these marks before you in order. Let every boy and girl come and hear what I am going to say.

1. I tell you then, for one thing, that children who walk in truth, *know the truth about sin.*

What is sin?—To break any command of God is sin. —To do anything that God says ought not to be done is sin. And God is very holy, and very pure, and every

sin that is sinned displeases Him exceedingly. But, in spite of all this most people in the world, both old and young, think very little about sin. Some try to make out they are not great sinners, and do not often break God's commandments. Others say that sin is not so terrible a thing after all, and that God is not so particular and strict as ministers say He is. These are two great and dangerous mistakes.

Children who walk in truth think very differently. They have no such proud and high feelings. They feel themselves full of sin, and it grieves and humbles them. They believe that sin is the abominable thing which God hates. They look upon sin as their greatest enemy and plague. They hate it more than anything on earth. There is nothing they so heartily desire to be free from as sin.

Dear Children, there is the first mark of walking in truth. Look at it. Think of it. *Do you hate sin?*

2. I tell you, for another thing, that children who walk in truth *love the true Saviour of sinners, and follow Him.*

There are few men and women who do not feel they need in some way to be saved. They feel that after death comes the judgment, and from that awful judgment they would like to be saved.

But alas! few of them will see that the Bible says there is only one Saviour, even Jesus Christ; and few go to Jesus Christ and ask Him to save them. They trust rather to their own prayers, or their own repentance, or their own church-going, or their own regular

attendance at sacrament, or their own goodness,—or something of the kind. But these things, although useful in their place, cannot save any one soul from hell. These are false ways of salvation. They cannot put away sin. They are not Christ.

Nothing can save you or me but Jesus Christ, who died for sinners on the cross. Those only who trust entirely to Him have their sins forgiven, and will go to heaven. These alone will find they have an Almighty friend in the day of judgment. This is the true way to be saved.

Children who walk in truth have learned all this, and if you ask them what they put their trust in, they will answer, "*Nothing but Christ.*" They remember His gracious words, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." They try to follow Jesus, as the lambs follow the good shepherd. And they love Him, because they read in the Bible that He loved them, and gave Himself for them.

Little Children, there is the second mark of walking in truth. Look at it. Think of it. *Do you love Christ?*

3. I tell you, for a third thing, that children who walk in truth *serve God with a true heart,*

I dare say you know it is very possible to serve God with outward service only. Many do so. They will put on a grave face, and pretend to be serious, while they do not feel it. They will say beautiful prayers with their lips, and yet not mean what they say. They will sit in their places at church every Sunday, and yet be thinking of other things all the time. Such service is outward service, and very wrong.

Bad children, I am sorry to say, are often guilty of this sin. They will say their prayers regularly, when their parents make them,—but not otherwise. They will seem to attend in church when the master's eye is upon them,—but not at other times. Their *hearts* are far away.

Children who walk in truth are not so. They have another spirit in them. Their desire is to be honest in all they do with God, and to worship Him in spirit and in truth. When they pray, they try to be in earnest, and to mean all the words they say. When they go to church, they try to be really serious, and to give their minds to what they hear. And it is one of their chief troubles that they cannot serve God more heartily than they do.

Dear Children, there is the third mark of walking in truth. Look at it. Think of it. *Is your heart false or true.*

4. I tell you, for a last thing, that children who walk in truth *really try to do things right and true in the sight of God.*

God has told us very plainly what He thinks right. Nobody can mistake this who reads the Bible with an honest heart. But it is sad to see how few men and women care for pleasing God. Many break His commandments continually,—and seem to think nothing of it. Some will tell lies, and swear, and quarrel, and cheat, and steal. Others use bad words, break the Sabbath, never pray to God at all, never read their Bibles. Others are unkind to their relations, or idle,

or gluttonous, or bad-tempered, or selfish. And all these things, whatever people may choose to think, are very wicked and displeasing to the holy God.

Children who walk in truth are always trying to keep clear of bad ways. They take no pleasure in sinful things of any kind, and they dislike the company of those who do them. Their great wish is to be like Jesus, holy, harmless, and separate from sinners. They endeavour to be kind, gentle, obliging, obedient, honest, truthful, and good in all their ways. It grieves them they are not more holy than they are.

Little Children, there is the last mark I shall give you of walking in truth. Look at it. Think of it. *Are your doings right or wrong?*

Children, you have now heard some marks of walking in truth. I have tried to set them plainly before you. I hope you have understood them.—*Knowing the truth about sin,—loving the true Saviour, Jesus Christ,—serving God with a true heart,—doing the things true and right in the sight of God;*—there they are, all four together. Think about them, I entreat you, and each ask yourself this question,—“What am I doing at this very time?—am I walking in truth?”

I dare be sure that many boys and girls here, know well what answer they ought to give. And God knows too, for He sees your hearts as plainly as I see your faces this minute. Children, the all-seeing God sends you a question this night, by my mouth,—He says,—*Are you walking in truth?*

Why should you not? Thousands of dear children have walked in truth already, and found it pleasant.

The way is trodden by many little feet before your own. Thousands of boys and girls are walking in truth at this moment,—and there is yet room. Dear Children, think this night, “*why should not you ?*”

II. And now I will go on to the second thing I promised to speak of.

I said I would try to show you some of the *reasons why John rejoiced to find this lady's children walking in truth*. Let me set about it. The text says, “I rejoiced greatly.” Now, why did he rejoice? There must have been some good reasons. John was not a man to rejoice without cause. Listen, dear Children, and you shall hear what those reasons were.

1. For one thing, John rejoiced *because he was a good man himself*.

All good people like to see others walking in truth, as well as themselves. I dare say you have heard how the angels in heaven rejoice when they see one sinner repenting. Some of you, no doubt, have read it in the fifteenth chapter of Luke. Well, good people are like the angels in this,—they are full of love and compassion,—and when they see any one turning away from sin, and doing what is right, it makes them feel happy.

Good people find walking in truth so pleasant, that they would like every body else to walk in truth too. They do not wish to keep all this pleasantness to themselves, and to go to heaven alone. They want to see all about them loving Jesus Christ, and obeying Him,—all their relations,—all their neighbours,—all their old

friends,—all their young ones,—indeed all the world. The more they see walking in truth, the better they are pleased.

Children, John was a good man, and full of love to souls, and this was one reason why he rejoiced.

2. For another thing John rejoiced *because it is very uncommon to see children walking in truth.*

Dear Children, I am very sorry to tell you there are many bad boys and girls in the world. Too many are careless, thoughtless, self-willed, and disobedient. Nobody can rejoice over them.

I hear many fathers and mothers complaining about this. I hear many schoolmasters and schoolmistresses speak of it. I am afraid it is quite true.

There are many children who will not give their minds to anything that is good. They will not do what they are bid. They like to be idle, and to have their own way. They love playing better than learning. They do things which God says are wicked and wrong, and are not ashamed. And all this is very sad to see.

John, you may be sure, had found this out, for he was an aged man as well as an apostle, and had seen many things. He knew that even the children of good people sometimes turn out very badly. I dare say he remembered Jacob and David, and all the sorrow their families caused them. And no doubt he knew what Solomon says in the book of Proverbs, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child."

When, therefore, John saw this lady's children not turning out ill, like others, but walking in the way they

should go, he might well feel it was a special mercy. I do not all wonder that he greatly rejoiced.

3. For another thing, John rejoiced *because he knew that walking in truth would make these children really happy in this life.*

John was not one of those foolish persons who do not like much religion, and fancy it makes people unhappy. John knew that the more true religion people have, the more happy they are.

John knew that life is always full of care and trouble, and that the only way to get through life comfortably is to be a real follower and servant of Jesus Christ.

Dear Children, remember what I say this night:—if ever you would be happy in this evil world, you must give your hearts to Jesus Christ and follow Him. Give Him the entire charge of your souls, and ask Him to be your Saviour and your God; and *then* you will be happy. Have no will of your own, and only try to please Him; and *then* your life will be pleasant.

Trust all to Christ, and He will undertake to manage all that concerns your soul. Trust in Him at all times. Trust in Him in every condition,—in sickness and in health,—in youth and in age,—in poverty and in plenty,—in sorrow and in joy. Trust in Him, and He will be a Shepherd to watch over you,—a Guide to lead you,—a King to protect you,—a Friend to help you in time of need. Trust in Him, and He says Himself, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” He will put His Spirit into you, and give you a new heart. He will give you power to become a true child of God. He will

give you grace to keep down bad tempers,—to be on longer selfish,—to love others as yourself. He will make your cares more light, and your work more easy. He will comfort you in time of trouble. Christ can make those happy who trust in Him. Christ died to save them, and Christ ever lives to give them peace.

Dear Children, John was well aware of these things. He had learned them by experience. He saw this lady's children likely to be happy in this world, and no wonder he rejoiced.

4. Lastly, John rejoiced *because he knew that walking in truth in the life that now is, would lead to glory and honour in the life to come.*

The life to come is the life we should all think most of. Many people seem only to care for what happens to them in this life. But they are sadly mistaken. This life is very short,—it will soon be over. The oldest man will tell you, it seems only a few years since he was a child. The life to come is the life of real importance;—it will have no end,—it will be never-ending happiness, or never-ending pain. Oh! what a serious thought that is!

Children, I doubt not John was thinking of the life to come, when he rejoiced. Our Lord Jesus Christ had often told him of the glorious rewards prepared for those who walk in truth. John thought of the rewards laid up in heaven for these children, and was glad.

I doubt not John looked forward in his heart to that day when Jesus shall come again. I dare say he saw in his mind's eye these dear children clothed in robes white as snow, having golden crowns on their heads,

standing at Jesus Christ's right hand, enjoying pleasures for evermore. He saw them and their beloved mother meeting again in heaven,—meeting in that blessed place where parting and sorrow shall be known no more.

Dear Children, these must have been sweet and pleasant thoughts. I do not wonder that John rejoiced.

And now I have finished what I have to say about our text. I have done what I promised. I have told you *what it is to walk in truth*.—That is one thing. I have told you *why John rejoiced so much to find this lady's children walking in truth*.—That is another. Let me now wind up all by saying something which, by God's help may fasten this sermon in your minds. Alas! how many sermons are forgotten! I want this sermon to stick in your hearts and do good.

Ask yourselves then, every one, "Would John, if he knew me at this time, rejoice over me? Would John be pleased if he saw my ways and my behaviour, or would he look sorrowful and grave?"

O children, children, do not neglect this question. This is no light matter. It may be your life. No wise man will ever rejoice over bad children. They may be clean and pretty, and have fine clothes, and look well *outwardly*, but a wise man will only feel sad when he sees them;—he will feel they are wrong *inwardly*. They have not new hearts,—they are not going to heaven. Believe me, it is far better to be good, than to be pretty. It is far better to have grace in your hearts, than to have much money in your pockets, or fine clothes on your backs. None but children who love Christ are the children who rejoice a wise man's heart.

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Beloved children, hear the last words I have to say to you. I give you all an invitation from Christ, my Master,—I say to you, in His name, *come and walk in truth.*

This is the way to gladden the hearts of your parents and relations. This is the one thing above all others, which will please your ministers and teachers. You little know how happy you make us, when you try to walk in truth. Then we feel that all is well, though we die and leave you behind us in this evil world. Then we feel that your souls are safe, though we are called away, and can help you and teach you no more. Then we feel that you are in the right way to be happy; and that you are prepared for troubles, however many may come upon you. For we know that walking in truth gives peace now, and we are sure that it leads to glory hereafter.

Come then, this night, and begin to walk in truth. The devil will try to make you think it is too hard,—you cannot do it. Believe him not, he is a liar. He wants to do you harm. Only trust in Christ, and follow Him; you will soon say His way is a way of pleasantness, and a path of peace. Only pray for the Holy Spirit to come into your heart, and you will soon feel strong. He can guide you into all truth. Only read the Bible regularly, and you will soon be made wise unto salvation. The Bible is the word of truth. Read and pray. Pray and read. Begin these habits, and keep them up. Do these things, and before long you will not say it is impossible to walk in truth. But *come, come at once.*

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